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THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SAINT PAUL

BY

PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D., F.B.A.

"Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now know we him so no longer."

SECOND IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

In 1907 I was asked to contribute to a volume of *Cambridge Biblical Essays* (published in 1909) a paper on some phase of the life and teaching of St Paul. I accepted the task, and chose for my subject the speeches of St Paul in Acts. As I worked in this limited field, the conviction began to impress itself upon me that though I had read many books on St Paul, and even written about him, I had by no means succeeded in fully understanding his purposes and the character of his teaching. In truth, Englishmen become so saturated with phrases from the Pauline Epistles, used in conventional senses, that it is very difficult for them to realise what those phrases meant to him who uttered them and to those to whom they were addressed. In addition to this, we have become accustomed to take our view of St Paul largely from Acts, the author of which book though a delightful personality, is by no means fully in sympathy with his hero.

The problem fascinated me, and I devoted most of a long vacation to an experiment. I set aside the books about St Paul, and tried to read his Epistles as if they had come before me for the first time—of course, using the help to be gained from my lifelong studies

of the period, and of the monuments of Greek and Roman antiquity. More particularly some knowledge of the religious surroundings and religious institutions of the Hellenistic age, especially of the Mysteries, is necessary to a complete grasp of the conditions under which St Paul worked.

My experiment, however imperfect its success, certainly produced in me a growing sense of the greatness of Paul and the reality of his inspiration. His powerful intellect is not so remarkable for its constructive force as for its marvellous good sense and practical efficiency. He has an intense feeling, both above and on the threshold of consciousness, for what is necessary for the future of the Christian society. His whole soul is filled and possessed by a profound sense that he is but the agent and interpreter of a power within and above him. This power works primarily in his own person, and in all those who receive inspiration from him, in a love of love, of sweetness, gentleness, and righteousness, a love which makes rules unnecessary, and aspiration to a higher life the very breath of the spirit. But from time to time in the letters there come human touches, touches pathetically human, which remove the writer by a whole abyss from the preacher who stands above his audience, or the prophet who has no feeling for anything except his message.

After my essay was sketched, and partly written, I next turned to the recent literature in regard to St Paul, both English and German. That literature is of enormous extent, and I have been unable to read a quarter of the books which might have been useful to

me. This I regret, but it was inevitable. Strange to say, the best short account of the Pauline theology known to me is still Matthew Arnold's essay of forty years ago: so greatly does insight surpass learning.

In place of an index, which in a book of this kind would be almost useless, I have inserted a full abstract of contents. I am indebted to my sister, Miss Alice Gardner, for reading the proofs and making many useful suggestions, also to Dr Moffatt for sending me references.

P. GARDNER.

OXFORD, *September* 1911.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION

SINCE this book was published, several important works on St Paul have appeared, by Kirsopp Lake, Garvie, Deissmann, Schweitzer, and others. Had I been able to use these books, I should no doubt have put some points better, or even modified some of my assertions. But I do not think I should have altered any view of importance. In particular I find myself in strong opposition to the main theory of Dr Schweitzer, that the key to St Paul's life and writings is to be found in his eschatological views. The reader must choose

between us. On the other hand, Professor Lake's book in many ways supports mine, of course independently.

Not having at present time to take up the work afresh, I have contented myself with altering a few words and phrases to which my attention has been called by reviewers.

P. G.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY: ACTS AND EPISTLES

The setting in of a strongly conservative tendency as regards the authorship of the Pauline Epistles, the general agreement of critics that these Epistles, except those to Timothy and Titus, and perhaps that to the Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians, are in the main really the work of the great Apostle, brings great gain to the student of early Christianity whose time for the study is limited. Some years ago we scarcely dared to cite passages from such Epistles as those to the Philippians and Colossians as proof of the character and views of St Paul. We may now venture to cast aside extreme timidity, and to read the letters of Paul as we read those of Cicero, more in the light of the historic imagination and of spiritual sympathy than in a keenly critical spirit.

This increase of trust in the Pauline documents is the more valuable as it makes up for a decrease in our trust in the historic character of the Gospels and Acts. It has long been recognised that the Fourth Gospel—though it may contain here and there valuable historic

traditions—is primarily not a work of sober history, but a document of religion, embodying in a narrative the beliefs and views of the second generation of Christians. That it may be the work of pupils of St John, and occasionally include traditions which came through him, is probable enough; but in essence it is a setting forth of the life, not of the Founder, but of the Church. And this mode of viewing the Gospels has now spread, in a measure, to the Synoptists. It is seen, more and more clearly, how largely Matthew and Luke are dominated by religious tendency and purpose, and reflect the views of particular groups in the early society. And even the Gospel of Mark, which has passed as the most primitive and trustworthy of the four, must have been preceded by a long period of incubation, during which the traditions of the life of Jesus were adapted and moulded by the various currents of belief and enthusiasm which were current in the infant Church.

It is true that quite recently a somewhat conservative tendency has been manifested in the recognition of the much discussed source called Q, to which some eminent theologians are disposed to assign a very early date and a high authority. This is the document, reconstructed on principles of criticism, whence are derived many passages which Matthew and Luke have in common, and which contained the teaching of Jesus rather than an account of his public life. I have long felt[1] that the statements of the Synoptic writers in regard to the discourses of Jesus are more to be trusted,

[1] So *Exploratio Evangelica*, pp. 142, 192, etc.

and are less affected by the demands of the early Church, than are their accounts of his actions. This has scarcely hitherto been the prevailing view of theologians, who have been disposed to exaggerate the priority of Mark. Of course any addition to the confidence with which we can read the recorded sayings of Jesus is a great gain. But the possibility of restoring Q as a document is still a burning question; and it would be rash to regard its position as established.[1]

This being the case, we must, after all, go back to the Pauline Epistles, not only as being the earliest in date of all the documents of Christianity (this is almost beyond dispute), but as being the safest basis for tracing the history of the Church, after the departure of the Founder, and even as throwing back light upon the conditions amid which Christianity arose.

I

The present work will deal almost exclusively with the Pauline Epistles. The life of Paul, as set forth in Acts, is of course of great value for the realisation of the surroundings and the journeys of the great Apostle. And it seems possible, in view of recent work, as summed up in Harnack's *Lukas der Arzt*, to assume as highly probable that this life of Paul is from the pen of his friend and companion Luke. Nevertheless there is no comparison possible between the value of the two sources of information. The Epistles take us

[1] A full account of Q is contained in Harnack's *Sayings of Jesus* (translated) and in the recent volume of *Oxford Biblical Essays*.

into the very centre and spring of the life of Paul: they seem in many places written with blood rather than with ink. They bring before us all the workings of the heart of Paul, all the turns and habits of his intellect, the very secret of his humanity. We have nothing of the kind in the Acts, the narrative of which only makes a background against which the man stands out. Luke is an extremely interesting personality, overflowing with human kindness and Christian charity, a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. But his character is so strikingly different from that of Paul that intercourse between the two can scarcely have been intimate. We can judge of Luke's intellectual qualities by comparing his Gospel with the others. Some of the chief characteristics of Luke are well set forth by Harnack in *Lukas der Arzt*.[1] He possessed a more than ordinary literary talent, and a great local knowledge of the cities of Greece and Asia. His medical profession seems to have led him to Christianity, in which he found a medicine not only for diseases and demonic possession, but for the soul. A considerable part of the matter peculiar to his Gospel is feminine in interest; and he is certainly far less virile than Paul. "Under his hands the universalist and humane, the social and individualist tendencies of Hellenism, the magical and ecstatic elements of Greek religion, as well as Greek thought and sense of form, mould the subject-matter of the traditional narratives." Faith-healing, physical marvels, what is picturesque, sudden, and catastrophic, attract him irresistibly. And he freely

[1] Eng. trans., pp. 147, 155, 163.

works such tendencies into his writings. Moreover, he is essentially and in grain a Greek man of letters, and under the dominion of all the conventions which were rigidly observed in Greek historic treatises. He regards his history partly as a work for edification, partly as a work of art, besides being a record of what actually took place. The *we* narrative is somewhat exceptional, as it seems to be based upon actual recollections of the journeys which the author—whether Luke or another—made in company with Paul. As a consequence, the account of Paul's conduct in the trying circumstances of his last voyage and shipwreck is the most vivid and the most trustworthy part of all that his disciple has to say about him.

We gain from it an impression, which we do not get from the Epistles, of Paul in his relations to those who were not Christians: how he impressed them by his superiority to circumstance, to danger and distress; how he must have seemed to them a man possessed, and living a life in God behind and beyond that exhibited upon earth. From the *we* narrative also we may gather invaluable hints as to Paul's procedure in his missionary journeys, how he set to work in a fresh city, or how he attracted the votaries of the Synagogue, the proselytes, and the worshippers of heathen deities.

Nevertheless we must never absolve ourselves from the duty of caution and criticism as we read the Lucan narrative, that is, if we read it not merely for personal edification, but as a historic narrative.

A few examples may set in a clear light the remarkable mental differences between Paul and Luke.

What could be a more marked contrast than that which exists between the Lucan account of the gift of tongues at Pentecost and the Pauline version of speaking with tongues as practised at Corinth? In the one case we have a sudden and miraculous power bestowed upon the Apostles to address in their own language all the strangers present at Jerusalem. The people exclaim, "Are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born?" "We do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God." When we turn to the Corinthian Epistle what we find described is a speaking in unintelligible fashion, so that an interpreter is necessary. The phenomenon as described by Paul has recurred in many of the revivals of religion. That described by Luke is in the highest degree marvellous and catastrophic; but in the whole of Acts there is not a word as to the use of the miraculous gifts thus bestowed on the Apostles. No reasonable critic can doubt that the difference between the two accounts lies not in the facts narrated, but in the mental attitude of the narrator. It may be said that in this case Luke does not write from personal knowledge, but only repeats a version current in the Church. This is doubtless the case; but the mental simplicity which accepts without any difficulty or hesitation a narrative quite at variance with all experience shows a facility quite different from the Pauline frame of mind.

If we compare the accounts given in Luke of the appearances of Jesus to the disciples after the resurrec-

tion with the accounts given in Matthew and Mark, we find a clear difference. It is Luke who insists upon the materiality of those appearances. He makes the risen Lord say to the disciples, when they were terrified, and supposed that they had seen a spirit: "Why are ye troubled, and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet that it is I myself, handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having." Luke even represents the Lord as demanding something to eat, and eating before the Apostles. This way of thought is remarkably un-Pauline. Paul is most emphatic that flesh and blood cannot have a part in the Kingdom of God, that the body must put away its materiality before it is ready to meet its Lord.

The same resolute materialism enters into the Lucan description of the death of Stephen, when the dying martyr sees in the skies above him the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. In the Lucan account of the conversion of St Paul, this materialism is less conspicuous, but there remain picturesque and catastrophic elements which we may fairly regard as Lucan.

Nothing could present a greater contrast to Luke's naïve delight in the miraculous than Paul's attitude towards it, which is in the highest sense sane and ethical. Paul tells the Corinthians that though he possessed in an unusual degree the gift of speaking with tongues, yet he would rather speak five words with his understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue. When he details the charismata or gifts

of the Spirit to the Church, he arranges them[1] roughly in order of value. At the head of these gifts he places wise words, then faith, then gifts of healing, then working of miracles. And when in a similar way he arranges the personal lights of the society, he places apostles first, then prophets, then teachers, then those who have the gifts of miracle and of healing. Charity, as everyone knows, he places above all the charismata. How different is Luke's point of view!

Now nothing but confusion can arise, if one in historic criticism uses without discrimination testimony drawn from authors of very different value and of diverse points of view. To mingle together in confusion statements about Paul's thought drawn from Acts with others derived from his own letters cannot lead to satisfactory results. The only result is to produce an enigmatic and conventional figure. In passing from the narrative in Acts to the Epistles we have to change our mental focus, as we use one kind of spectacles for looking at things close to us, and another kind for looking into the distance. In reading Acts we have to make allowance for the methods and the personality of Luke, or even of his authorities. In reading the Epistles we have to beware of the unconscious exaggerations and perversions which arise from the fiery and impetuous nature of the Apostle himself. To push this distinction to the extreme would no doubt savour of pedantry: in all such matters logical method has to be softened by an application of common-sense and

[1] 1 Cor. xii.

practical purpose. But it must never be wholly lost sight of. It is true that if I were writing a *life* of Paul I should be obliged to use for it every kind of trustworthy material which offered. But in writing an account of his religious experience, Acts is almost a negligible source.

We may, if we please, give more vividness to our picture of the great Apostle by accepting the early tradition embodied in the tale of Paul and Thecla, that he was short in stature, bald, with hook-nose, and beetling brows; to which description we gladly add that there was a kindly graciousness about him. Modern commentators think they have proof that his eyes were weak. Certainly his health was not strong; he appears to have been subject to epileptic fits, he was certainly liable to periods of profound depression. But no bodily weakness could tame or clog the unconquerable spirit of the man. He had learned to derive fresh strength, as his own decayed, from an infinite spiritual source; such men often preserve into old age the freshness and energy which tend to ebb in middle life in the case of those who trust to their own resources.

From the speeches of Paul, as set forth in Acts, we cannot draw very definite conclusions. It was the fully accepted habit of every ancient historian to put into the mouths of his heroes speeches which should define their point of view and throw light on the situation.[1] Luke undoubtedly conforms to this custom,

[1] I have dwelt on this custom in *Exploratio Evangelica*, pp. 159–167. Compare Jebb, *Essays and Addresses*, pp. 359–446.

and composes speeches for Peter and Paul, not with the view of recording exactly what they said on any occasion (to a Greek that would seem blundering realism), but to give light and shade to the portrait which he wishes to draw. And Luke is a writer of such skill, and so richly endowed with dramatic talent, that his speeches, though not strictly historic, are of the greatest possible value to the historian. They show, not indeed what was uttered on a particular occasion, but what ought to have been uttered, to set forth the true bearing of the occasion and to embody the character of the speaker.

Fresh study constantly increases one's admiration for the skill with which Luke modifies his speeches, alike as regards matter and style, to suit the occasion. As in the works of some of the greatest novelists, one sees cause and effect working in human life without the accidents and friction which in the world as it exists would be intervening at every turn; so does Luke eliminate the unessential and give us the typical. Sometimes, as when he reports the speech of the fussy, self-important orator Tertullus, we may even see humorous exaggeration, though the humour may be unconscious.

Luke inserts six longer speeches as by Paul. In the first, that addressed to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia,[1] he sets forth Paul's manner of addressing the Jews: how he appealed to Hebrew history and to Scripture, and tried to show how the life and death of Jesus were the

[1] Acts xiii. 16–41. I have treated of these speeches in greater detail in a paper published in the volume of *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, 1909.

crown and consummation of the history of the chosen race. In the second discourse, that at Athens (where Paul was alone, with no Christian to report him), the Hellenistic side of Paul's training and teaching is brought into a strong light. Luke here goes a little too far; for it is scarcely possible to imagine the Paul of the Epistles taking so academic and philosophic a line. The pupil is carried away by the magic of the name of Athens, and attributes to Paul too much of his own astonishing versatility. The third discourse, that uttered at Miletus to the Ephesian Presbyters,[1] is an address of Paul to his own disciples and friends. Here we are very far nearer to the Paul who wrote the letters to the Thessalonians and Corinthians. But in this case there would naturally be much less of the composition of the historian, since Luke was present on the occasion; and if he listened to the actual words of his master with sympathetic emotion, he could scarcely refrain from allowing them to dominate his report, though obviously that account is the mere outline of a long discourse. It is a consequence of the fact that this speech in Acts depends more on memory, and is less of a composition, that it is defective in arrangement. Commentators have regarded the way in which the writer goes backward and forward, returning to points on which he has already touched, as an argument against the authenticity of the report. In reality it is the best proof of its authenticity. Anyone who tries to repeat from memory the outlines of a discourse heard long ago will be sure to wander somewhat at random, taking up one point

[1] Acts xx. 18–35.

after another as they arise out of the mists of the past. In this speech we have a reflection of the real Paul: warm-hearted, impulsive, generous, at one moment dwelling in delight on what he had been able to do for the Churches; in the next falling back on the profound conviction that himself and the Churches alike were absolutely in the hands of God, with whom rested all the future.

The fifth speech, that uttered before Felix, shows us Paul in a novel attitude: as one accused before a Roman tribunal, and determined to defend himself by any legitimate means. It is a forensic discourse, such as any pleader in the courts might have uttered, and with little belonging to Paul as a personality.

The fourth and sixth discourses, those uttered at Jerusalem, and at Cæsarea before King Agrippa, take a line almost identical. They are autobiographic, giving a brief history of the conversion of the speaker and his call to missionary work. With the facts of Paul's early biography, which his historian gives in somewhat inconsistent detail in various passages, I must deal later. I need here only observe that nothing is more likely or more in accord with psychology than that a great religious leader, when on trial for his life, should fall back on autobiography, and give his reasons for believing that the course he had taken was the course laid down for him by the Power which had sent him into the world. The *apologia pro vita sua* of a missionary must almost necessarily take the form of a narrative of religious experience, and of a trust conferred by God.

But even the speech at Miletus does not add much to our knowledge of the inwardness of Paul. It gives valuable historic evidence to the effect that the Pauline Epistles are really by the Apostle; but it is too brief and generalising to be of much value to such investigations as that on which we are at present engaged. Let us turn rather to the Epistles, and try from them to discern what is the nature of the Pauline teaching, and what was the spring of energy which led to a life of such spiritual transport, and such suffering, of such enthusiasm for humanity, and such wisdom in counsel, of such high passions, which yet never broke away from the controlling power of a will which depended on a continuous divine inspiration.

II

I propose to use the Epistles generally as evidence for the Pauline views, excluding only those to Titus and Timothy, which are not doctrinally important. The Epistles fall naturally into three groups. The earliest are probably those to the Thessalonians, which, however, are less important in relation to the Pauline thought. In the second group come the great central documents, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. In the third group we must place the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians. Between the second and the third group we may notice certain changes of opinion, especially in regard to the Second Coming; but the general scheme of belief is not greatly altered, though it shows a certain amount of development.

Twenty years ago it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to embark upon an essay like the present without a preliminary examination of the question which Epistles and which chapters are really Pauline. But recently the tendency of criticism has set so strongly in the direction of conceding the authenticity of all that is important in the extant letters, that it has become possible to absolve oneself from this task. If one accepts the attitude and the general results of such writers as Harnack, Moffatt, and Jülicher, one has a firm basis on which to build. It is true that a number of important questions in regard to the Pauline writings remain unsolved. For example, many critics regard the Roman Epistle as a document made up of more than one letter, and think that the last chapter really belongs to an Epistle to the Ephesians. The authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is disputed; and Ephesians is supposed by many to be not addressed to the Church at Ephesus, but rather to that at Laodicea, or (more probably) to be a sort of circular letter addressed to various Churches. But these questions are of subordinate importance. Not having time myself to go into such inquiries, I am ready generally to accept the decisions in regard to them reached by one of the most judicious of New Testament critics, Professor Jülicher, whose great work, translated into English,[1] is easily accessible. Jülicher does not reject as unauthentic any part of the Epistles which is at all important to the present work.

If it could be shown, as was held, *e.g.* by Pfleiderer, that the whole of the third group of Epistles was non-

[1] *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 32–200.

Pauline, the work of disciples who carried further the views of Paul on many points, no doubt this would affect the basis of my structure in some degree. For it is precisely those parts of Paul's teaching which are most clearly set forth in Ephesians and Colossians on which I lay special stress. But it seems impossible that any disciple should use so exactly the thought, the manner, and even the language of the great Apostle, while yet there is no trace of such a man in history. The author of Hebrews, though Pauline in tendency, shows quite a distinct personality of his own. And we feel that so great a writer as the composer of Colossians and Ephesians must have been, could not have concealed his individuality completely behind that of his master.

We may well regard the little Epistle to Philemon, which is conspicuously Pauline, as an intermediate link between the second and third group of Epistles. The differences in teaching between the two groups may be accounted for mainly by two considerations. Firstly, the third group is later in time, written in captivity at Rome, and embodying the results of the many days of comparative quiet and meditation which must have intervened; and secondly, these letters were addressed to communities mainly composed of Gentile converts; and it is a marked feature of the mind of Paul that keen sympathy makes him adapt his teaching to the minds of those for whom he writes.

Even if it were some day proved that Colossians and Ephesians were written, or at all events remoulded, by a disciple, the argument of the present work would not be greatly affected. In that case one would say that

these Epistles are children of Paul, born after his death, but nevertheless really children of his spirit. They carry further the views and beliefs which are found, though in a less fully developed condition, in the earlier Epistles.

Any complete or detailed consideration of the Pauline Epistles must take into account the circumstances under which each was written, and the state of the Churches to which they were addressed: the dangers which threatened them, and the duties which lay nearest to them. Some Epistles, like Romans, are more consecutive and treatise-like; some deal with events which have happened among the converts; some are earnest protests against heresies which have sprung up. Nevertheless it is legitimate to regard them, so to speak, as different facets of a single diamond. They are points in the circumference of a circle, whence in each case we must try to work back to the centre, the personality of the Apostle himself. They reveal, indeed, no self-consistent system of doctrine, no completely developed philosophy; but they constantly throw jets of light on the mind and spirit of the writer, which have not indeed a harmonious outline, but yet have the consistency and reality which come of the collision between life within full of purpose and the circumstances which it is bending to its will.

In giving an account of some great writers, it is desirable, or even necessary, to divide their lives into periods. They sometimes set out in one direction, and then, falling under the influence of a powerful teacher, or perhaps passing through remarkable spiritual and mental experiences, alter their course, or even retrace

their steps. Different parts of their lives, or different works of their genius, embody different tendencies and ideas. But this was not the case with Paul. He had one great crisis; and then he reset his sails. But from that crisis to the end of his career he moves onwards in a steady course. The light with him shines more and more unto the perfect day. Thus there is no more need to divide his career into periods than there is need to criticise a great building at various periods of its erection. We wait for the completed edifice before we judge of it. Much which is rudimentary and undeveloped in the earlier Pauline Epistles is worked out and becomes more explicit in the later writings. But it exists at least in embryo and unconsciously from the first. On one point only, in regard to the second coming of his Master, do we find a decided modification of view. The rest is all development.

The transitions in thought and expression in these Epistles are made much more intelligible if we consider that they were dictated to an amanuensis who wrote in long-hand, though doubtless using the easy and flowing script which had become usual for letters in the first century. This will greatly help to explain their style. The violent transitions and inconsistencies which they contain may often be easily understood, if we suppose that the successive portions of them were written sometimes at intervals of hours or days, and under the influence of varied emotions. There is in them very little of the methodical treatise.

I do not know whether it has occurred to any commentator to try to determine at what point a

day's dictation left off. The experiment might be worth making. For example, at Rom. xii. the Apostle seems to begin in another frame of mind, having other thoughts on its surface. It might not be easy to distinguish between a fresh day's work and the result of an interruption, or a sudden revulsion of feeling. Yet I think that, if this experiment were made, it might cut away much of the grounds for which critics have been disposed to think that separate letters have been amalgamated into one, or that interpolations have been made in the documents which have come down to us. The modern critic is naturally disposed to think of Paul as composing in the manner of our day, sitting at his desk, re-reading what he had written, altering and cancelling as he proceeds. This is our way ; but it was not the way of Paul.

Note to Chapter I.—The Epistle to the Ephesians. Since this chapter was written, there has been published Dr Moffatt's admirable *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament.* It is difficult to speak too highly of the learning and the sound judgment shown in this volume, which to the English reader who is not a theological specialist is a priceless boon. Dr Moffatt regards Colossians as written by Paul ; but Ephesians he is disposed, though with great hesitation, to regard rather as the work of a disciple.[1] My own studies confirm this view in so far that undoubtedly Ephesians does represent a somewhat more advanced phase of Pauline thought than any other of the Pauline

[1] *Introduction*, pp. 373–395

Epistles: it is quite possible to draw the line which divides the really Pauline from the sub-Pauline between Colossians and Ephesians. But yet this gap is small compared with that which separates Colossians from Corinthians. I think, therefore, that I have still the right to take the benefit of the doubt, and to treat Ephesians as Pauline, though with full reservation.

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Chapter II

ST PAUL'S CONVERSION

It is possible to regard the life of any of those heroes who have marked the steps of human progress, either in a more naturalistic or a more religious way. We may consider them as the results of development working by law, or as persons sent by God to do a certain work in the world. In the case of Paul, it would no doubt be possible to find in him much that might be explained in the first way; but there are very few men in regard to whom such explanation would be less complete and satisfying. He is the very type of the inspired man, the man with a commission which he cannot and dares not neglect. His dependance upon spiritual support is overwhelmingly clear to those who study his life.

It is doubtless the business of the historian to trace continuity in events, to discern the connections of things, to trace back as far as possible all the moral qualities and intellectual tendencies of the heroes of history to the effects of inheritance and environment. The more strictly scientific a historian is, the more he will be disposed to see all the past knit together in a chain of cause and effect. Thus it is natural that

many of the high German authorities who have written about Paul have been anxious to minimise the catastrophic in his life, and to discern a historic origin for the beliefs which he introduced into the Church. Let them thus explain all that they can. But, after all, what is important and interesting in Paul is not what he inherited but what he originated; his new point of view, his personal character and inspiration. There is profound philosophy as well as fine poetry in the lines, "A little more, and how much it is; a little less, and what worlds away." It is the happy variations from the set type which mark the way for a new race or a new religion. And these variations come from above; they are heavenly ideas showing through the earthly environment, to be recognised only by the sons of God.

According to one of the most recent, and one of the ablest writers on Paul,[1] the Apostle in his mission "proceeded by plan and with a connected scheme." I hold rather that his wisdom came from above, and was no mere adaptation of means to ends. He probably saw but a little way before him, had enough light for the next move, but no more. The same writer[2] says that Paul's "own reflections transformed themselves into revelations." That is the view of over-scientific history. If Paul had no share in the "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," if the Power which directs and controls history did not speak through him, then man is indeed in the language of Goethe "a troubled wanderer on a darkened earth."

[1] Wrede, *Paul*, p. 47. [2] p. 20.

I

Of Paul's early life we have but a few glimpses. We learn that he was a citizen of Tarsus, which in itself is a valuable fact, for the character of Tarsus as a city combining the philosophy of Greece with Oriental mysticism was not usual.[1] We know that he was of Pharisaic family, well instructed in the Jewish law, and strictly observing it. He himself says that as regards the righteousness which was in the law he was blameless. His past had been very different from that of some of his Gentile converts. "They had," he says, "worked all uncleanness with eagerness." We can well believe that in the poorer parts of the great Hellenistic cities the vices of debauchery and unchastity, of strife and envy, rioted almost unchecked. Of such vices Paul never accuses himself.[2] And we may be sure that, like other men of religious genius converted in middle life, he would not have dissembled the faults of his youth if they had existed. He had been a highly moral Pharisee, and lived the strictest of lives. It is not any special sin or bad habit of his own of which Paul is thinking when he proclaims the fallen state of man and his need of salvation from above; but it is an unregenerate state of the will, which makes a division between man and

[1] There is an excellent paper on Tarsus in Sir W. M. Ramsay's *Cities of St Paul*.

[2] It may be said that Titus iii. 3 may be regarded as such a self-accusation. But, in the first place, the *we* is ambiguous, and may stand for others; and, in the second place, the passage is almost certainly not Pauline.

God, and forms a barrier against the stream of divine grace.

It is this conviction growing in the heart of Paul, and culminating in his conversion, which makes that conversion one of the most momentous events in the history of the world, one of the great turning-points in the line of human evolution. Everything in the Pauline teaching starts with the sense of sin. This sense, though the course of history had led up to it, first appears on the stage of the world's drama with Paul.

It is scarcely necessary to remind classical scholars that a sense of sin is not to be found in early Greek literature. It is absent alike from the joyous sensuousness of Homer, the lofty morality of Æschylus, and the ethical philosophising of Plato. I say "sense of *sin*," not of "*sins*." Of course the great Greek writers recognised the fact that man could fall into wickedness. And they were vividly alive to the certainty that crime will needs bring punishment from the Gods. The Erinnyes, the spirits who punish, ever follow like sleuth-hounds the track of those who are stained with wickedness until they overtake them. But this recognition does not carry with it the consciousness that men are apt by nature to come into that false relation towards the divine will which may be called a state or condition of sin.

Even in the later literature of Greece, which in many ways comes nearer to modern life and thought, we do not find a consciousness of the sinful tendency of the human will. But beneath the conventional

surface of the later Greek literature, there was spreading from the East to the West a strong sense of human depravity and of the need of reconciliation with God. How this feeling took possession of the minds of men, to what theories of good and evil it gave birth at Alexandria, what religious societies sprang into being in order to satisfy its demands, it is impossible here to detail. Mankind, or at least the more religious part of it, had become convinced of evil inherent in the race of men, and of the need of some heavenly cleanser, who should make its peace with the divine power.

It was natural that the Jewish race, the most ethically susceptible race of the ancient world, should move in the same direction as the heathen world, but with more conscious steps. Thus, in some of the later Psalms, the sense of sin appears as an overmastering conviction. In the 40th Psalm we read, "Mine iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me." In the 51st Psalm we have an even stronger expression: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." And the writer of this wonderful Psalm sees that sin can only be expelled by a change of nature: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew within me a right spirit."

It was one of the deepest convictions of the later Israel—the Israel which had been refined by persecution and had grown by faith—that sin was an ultimate fact of human nature, that it was a constant and intoler-

able burden on the soul, and that it could only be removed by divine grace. The experience of the race was repeated in the experience of each member of the race who partook of the national spirit. And by no Jew was it more keenly felt than by Paul. He had sought by a rigid observance of the law to still the sense of sin. But he found that he could not thus attain to peace. External propriety of demeanour did not mean inward harmony and a sense of freedom. Rather, it was a galling bondage. He found himself constrained by a rigid law to courses of conduct in which he found no happiness, while all the time there was a force of sin which warred against the law of his mind. He found himself doing the evil he condemned, and failing of the good after which he strove. This state of mind is clearly reflected in Romans, where Paul clearly reverts in imagination to his early trials and struggles, anxious to point out to others the reef whereon he had once been stranded.

II

We do not know in what way Paul first came into relations with the Christian society. It seems certain that he had not seen Jesus, and had been absent from Jerusalem when the fearful tragedy of the crucifixion had taken place. But Luke's statement that he was present at the stoning of Stephen is no doubt historically true. We are able from certain hints in the Pauline letters to judge what were the grounds of Paul's early hatred for the Christian name. Like all

Pharisees of the time, he was eagerly expecting the revelation of a Messiah, and the end of the existing polity. And, under the influence of the School of Alexandria, he had made up his mind as to the nature of the Messiah: that he was to be a high, spiritual being, living in the presence of God since the world was made and sometimes taking part in mundane affairs. With the rabbis Paul thought that Christ had been promised to Abraham, and had as a rock followed the children of Israel in the desert, to supply them with water. This Christ, thus revealed in glimpses in the past, was about to come in glory and power to vindicate oppressed Israel, and to overthrow the Roman dominion.[1]

We can imagine with what horror and revulsion a man occupied with such expectations would hear the Christian message that Christ had already come and been manifested in the flesh, and had been crucified at Jerusalem by the Roman Governor. It was the complete negation of all his hopes and beliefs. And there was a verse in Deuteronomy[2] which came to his mind with crushing force: "He that is hanged is accursed of God." Crucifixion was a kind of hanging, and the cross to all men at the time meant what the gallows means to us. Paul, like his contemporaries, was accustomed to take texts of Scripture in a detached way, out of their connection. Just as the phrase "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" dwelt in the mind of the writer of Hebrews, and became a foundation-stone of his the-

[1] This matter is treated in more detail in chap. ix. [2] xxi. 23.

ology, so the phrase of Deuteronomy possessed the mind of Paul. We may see this from the way in which he uses it in Galatians,[1] "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." By that time the phrase had been worked into his theology; but, reading between the lines, we can clearly see how great had been its power in his Jewish days to make the scandal of the cross offensive to him. The law and a crucified Saviour could not exist together. The result of their juxtaposition in the mind of Paul was at first a passionate hostility to the Christian name, and a determination to extirpate it. This is certain not only from the history of Luke, but from Paul's own testimony that he had been a persecutor of the Church.[2]

If violent action against the Christians had brought Paul peace and a feeling that he was acting in accord with the will of God, he might have held on in that course. But the feverish activity of persecution did not still the inward dissatisfaction. In the speech put into Paul's mouth by Luke, when he is defending himself before King Agrippa, he reports that at Damascus the Lord said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." The phrase does not recur in other Lucan versions of the conversion, so that evidence of the notion's first occurring to Paul's mind on that occasion is slight. We may rather conjecture that Luke had heard from Paul himself that before his conversion he had been like a ploughing ox kicking against the goad, furiously striving against the will of the driver, and thereby

[1] iii. 13. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

only inflicting wounds on itself. The time came when Paul could no longer resist the spiritual powers which were urging him into the furrows of the Christian mission-field.

Dr Wrede has maintained that we have insufficient evidence of this state of mind in Paul. He writes,[1] "The truth is, the soul-strivings of Luther have stood as model for the portrait of Paul." It will to an English reader seem strange that Luther should be thus spoken of as unique; we know the type so well in many religious leaders. Luther was not the first whose soul-strivings with the sense of sin were notable; indeed, one might have expected the name of Augustine in this place rather than that of Luther, who only followed in the wake of thousands who have been driven by the inward conflict into monasteries and hermitages, into martyrdom and exile, into notable deeds and great reforms. And modern psychology regards such a state of mind as eminently human and natural, not meaning by "natural" what is obvious and superficial. After the full treatment of the subject of conversion in recent works on religious psychology, we see clearly that neither Paul nor Luther was unique, but that they were extreme instances of a species which is common.[2]

III

Then came the conversion. It is a great misfortune in regard to our conception of St Paul, that the

[1] *Paul*, trans., p. 146.

[2] See especially W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

account of that conversion in Acts has been taken as sober history. There was no excuse for so taking it, since in Acts there are three separate narratives of the event, differing not merely in detail, but in essential points, so that they cannot all be correct. In ix. 3 Paul is said to have seen a sudden light, and, falling to the earth, to have heard a voice speaking to him, while his companions stood by speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. In xxvi. 13 we have substantially the same account, except that all the companions are said to have fallen to the ground also. In xxii. 9 we have a curious variety; the companions of Paul are said to have seen a light, but heard no voice. These differences are interesting, and show how little we can rely on the Lucan narrative for accuracy. In writing the account of the conversion which comes in the later chapters, the writer did not care to turn back to an earlier passage to see what he had said there. To our modern criticism, which is aware of the love of Luke for the striking and marvellous, and the way in which he works up his narratives with a view to dramatic effect, it is naturally suggested that the bright light, the heavenly vision, the articulate words, may, in part at least, be due to the Evangelist. When Paul in his letters speaks of his conversion, he describes it in very different language,[1] "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me." That is really all that we can be said to know as to the conversion, which may have been sudden, but probably was led up to by many events not recorded in history.

[1] Gal. i. 15.

We should be disposed to attribute greater historic value to another fact chronicled by Luke in relation to the conversion of Paul. It would seem that the great crisis was not distantly connected with the death of Stephen. Luke does not mention any definite relation of cause and effect between the two events; but he puts them into such a relation that every reader is disposed to deduce a near connection between them. The speech put into the mouth of Stephen, a speech tedious and without definite point, is one of the least convincing passages in Acts. It seems to be taken from some written document, the authenticity of which we may well doubt. The picturesque points in the narrative—the vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, the face seen like the face of an angel, the dying prayer: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"—may be partly due to the Evangelist. But they may, with perhaps greater probability, be traced back to words spoken by Paul in his presence, and dwelling afterwards in his imagination. But in any case it seems in the highest degree probable that it was the triumphant death of the martyr which first shook the self-confidence of the "young man called Saul" and infused into him a doubt whether, after all, the adherents of the new heresy might not live on a higher plane of life than that of the Pharisees, and be nearer to the purposes of God in relation to the Jewish race. If the reaction of the will against this doubt drove Paul more fiercely into the path of persecution, that would be quite in accordance with historic analogy. The first result of the introduction of doubt into an intensely religious mind is

often a revulsion into fanaticism. And the fanaticism leads further and further until it ends in a sudden bankruptcy. Then is the moment when a new principle of faith may find a room empty and garnished.

Whatever the outward conditions of the conversion, it is clear that there then entered into the life of Paul a new force which inspired and cleansed it. He had been struggling in vain to reach the port in the teeth of the wind, and had been lifted into it by a huge wave. A power, not himself, had taken over his life, giving him strength to do what before he had been unable to do. The Son of God, as he says, was revealed in him. The way which had been obscure became clear. The heart which had been hard was melted by a divine fire. The love of God, which had existed only in an aspiration of the will, became a power to move the life. The whole man was changed, and became a friend and servant of the cause which he had persecuted, an embodiment of the life on earth of the Christ whom he had hated. It was the most notable instance of an event which in Christian history has been repeated again and again, the classical example of salvation by faith in Christ.

Such sudden and radical changes in a man's life may often be led up to by many experiences and thoughts. But these often culminate in what may be called a violent spiritual and emotional tempest, which shakes the whole being to its utmost depths. We can scarcely imagine, save in the case of a few men of superlatively intellectual temperament, such as Descartes, that the great change which alters the course of life should arise out of sudden mental insight.

Usually it is emotion, passionate and profound, which dominates. That emotion, in the case of Paul, was the love of God. But this is a phrase of ambiguous meaning; it may mean the love of God to man, or it may mean the love of man to God. I think we may see in some passages of St Paul's Epistles that in his belief the love of God to man came to him first, and stirred up in the depth of his soul a return of passion. In a passage in the most formal of his Epistles,[1] St Paul seems to be thinking of his own conversion when he writes, "God proves his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "If, while we were in enmity, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by sharing in his life." St Paul may be laying down doctrine; but it is doctrine based on personal experience. He scarcely thought of the death of Christ as a fact in history; rather, it was an event in religious experience. Suddenly there had dawned upon the Apostle an intense conviction of the love which God bore to men, inasmuch as he had for their sakes given up his beloved Son to a cruel death. This conviction had the power which love, as supreme among the emotions, has in all noble natures, to break the ties of habit, of prejudice, and of indolence, and to carry one away on a flood of emotion into a new life. And the exchange of love for love seems never to have died down in the Apostle's heart, but to have been a never ceasing source of energy and of happiness. We do not find in his Epistles the gloomy, self-conscious passages

[1] Romans v. 8–10.

which we scarcely miss in the life of any of the saints. If much love blots out many sins, the sins of Paul must have vanished like the spots on a garment consumed in the fire.

Such inner crises have a way of taking in history a picturesque form. The Lucan account may give to the conversion a suddenness and a dramatic character which go beyond the facts. It may have been a more gradual process. But whether it took place in a single hour, or whether it worked itself out in days of struggle and stress, makes no great difference in the result. Modern psychology is fully disposed to allow that sudden conversion is in accord with experience; though amid the conventions and refinements of modern civilised life, a more gradual change of life is more usual. But a great religious awakening, whether sudden or gradual, does, as is proved in a thousand recorded cases, work very deeply in the life and the emotions, and the will often turns about it, as racing yachts turn round a fixed point at sea, and retrace their course.

IV

It clearly appears from some striking passages in the Epistles that St Paul regarded his reception into the Christian Church, the body of Christ, as an escape from servitude into liberty. We may take three passages from undisputed Pauline Epistles as expressing this fact. In Gal. v. 1 he speaks exultingly of the freedom wherewith Christ made the disciples free, a freedom to be resolutely cherished, but not to be allowed to degenerate into selfishness. In 2 Cor. iii. 17

he cries with exultation that wherever the spirit of Christ is, there is liberty. In Rom. viii. 21 he speaks of the whole creation as waiting to be received into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Sometimes it is the bondage of the law from which Christ sets us free. But this kind of liberty is not that needed by Gentile converts, who had never lived under the Jewish law. So it is not a mere freedom from rule and ordinance of which the Apostle is usually thinking. It is a deliverance from the bondage of sin into the service of righteousness. "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life."[1] By the use of one of the splendid paradoxes of the higher life, the acceptance of the service of God is equated with a supreme and glorious liberty.

To a Jew an escape from the minute regulations of the law, which enmeshed the whole life with a series of fasts and of feasts, of ritual and ordinance, the acceptance of Christianity—by which a man at once stood looser to the rigid regulations of the Jewish ritual—might well in a sense seem liberty. And one learns from 1 Cor. viii. that those who had escaped from the bondage of the law were apt to claim complete freedom of behaviour in such matters as the keeping of days, or the eating of meat sacrificed to the pagan deities, to a degree which scandalised weaker brethren. In addressing such followers, Paul evidently speaks with sympathy, as one to whom all ordinances were really indifferent, but yet with the

[1] Romans vi. 22.

wise toleration of common-sense and of a man of the world. When the very principle of liberty from the law was at stake, as it was when Judaising Christians demanded that the rite of circumcision should be maintained in the discipline of the Church, then Paul with all his soul leads the cause of liberty. But when it is a mere matter of custom, of eating and drinking, and observing set days, he displays the grand indifference of a large spirit.

Paul is, however, by no means blind to the difficulties which must always arise when a doctrine of liberty is preached, and when conventions—the existence of which is so necessary to the working of society—are depreciated. Liberty may become antinomian, or it may become a snare when those who are only kept in the ways of morality by the practice of rules begin to think that the rules are valueless. It is not always easy to find a remedy for this looseness. But in the first enthusiasm of Christianity, one lay ready to hand in the mutual affection of the disciples. The nature of this remedy is set forth in most beautiful terms in 1 Corinthians: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if a man see thee which hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For so through thy knowledge he that is weak perishes, the brother for whom Christ died."[1] The limit of liberty is thus not a rule, however reasonable, but an enthusiasm. Love makes liberty stop of her own

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 10.

accord, and willingly give up the extreme of her course.

But in another aspect Christian liberty requires more explanation. It is not at once obvious how the acceptance of the faith of Christ increases our freedom. Probably the great majority of men at the present day look on Christianity in precisely the opposite way. They see that it is a call to a noble life, that it is the way of self-denial, of devotion to the good of others, that it is a path towards the ideal. But the very reason for which they find it hard to enter on that path is that it seems to imply an immediate sacrifice of liberty. One is not, in this connection, thinking so much of what are everywhere acknowledged to be anti-social customs: gluttony, sensuality, dishonourable ways of making money, disregard of the welfare of one's neighbours. For not only by every branch of the Christian Church, but by all the current schools of morality, such anti-social courses as these are stigmatised, and every one who chooses to indulge himself in these respects must needs know that his conduct cannot be defended. But, besides, even superficial forms of Christianity, if honestly accepted, require in their adherent a greater degree of self-control and self-restraint than is convenient or comfortable to those who live in the current of ordinary society. Men are often found who are willing to sacrifice themselves in some degree in the interests of religion, but who never for a moment doubt that it is a sacrifice. They look on religion mainly as a call to self-sacrifice in a good cause. They are willing to make the sacrifice, but they

do it grudgingly and regretfully. The idea of Christian liberty in the higher Pauline sense seems to them unreal.

It is probable that in this case, as in others, we may find that the profound insight of Paul goes further into the real facts of the case than does the common-sense of those who do not see beneath the surface. The people with whom he had to do were almost exclusively of a low social class, who did not live a life of outward decorum, but followed the ordinary sensual ways which prevailed among the poorer classes in the great cities. Yet it is probable that had he come into contact with those regarded as the props of society, such men as Gallio or the friends of Cicero, he would not greatly have altered his point of view. For his spiritual myopia saw with far greater distinctness the alternations of black and white than the various shades of grey. Like many men of genius, he saw but one thing at a time, and saw that one thing with an intensity which made it for the time seem all-important.

The sense of liberty as arising out of Christian faith was no doubt in the Churches which Paul founded propagated from believer to believer; and the source of it lay in the spiritual experience of the Apostle himself. He speaks of it with so much confidence and such keen emotion, because it was to him one of the primary facts of his life. But the experience was by no means peculiar to Paul: it has been that of thousands before and after his time. Nor is it by any means peculiar to Christianity, nor even to religion. It is one of the root-facts of human life.

There are two kinds of liberty. There is a lower

and more obvious kind, which lies in doing what at the moment one feels disposed to do, indulging one's fancies, attaining to this and that satisfaction, moving like a butterfly from flower to flower, wherever honey can be found. There is also a far nobler kind of liberty which consists in the conscious expansion of life, in breaking through the crust of convention and tradition towards the ideal. Such is the feeling of the lover, when the moral and social barriers which separated him from the object of his passion melt away, and he is free to love. Such is the feeling of the man of action when the way is suddenly broken into a new career, and he feels that he can move forward with confidence. Such is the feeling of the artist when, after many failures and disappointments, he begins to see how his ideal may be made actual. There can scarcely be found in the world a joy equal to this feeling of expansion, of motion. It is almost like the acquisition of a new sense, or the entry into a new world. It is like what we can imagine the feeling of a fish to be, if he has been left by the tide in a land-locked pool, and begins to feel the flow of the returning waters; or what we can suppose to be the delight of the dragon-fly when he shuffles off the skin of his life in the pool, and feels his wings expanding for flight.

The enthusiasm of the escape into a larger life has found expression among religious men in various ages. The author of Psalm 119 writes, "I will run in the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart." "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." This enlargement or

setting free of the heart, so that it may move forward with enthusiasm, is exactly what Paul had in his earlier days craved, and had found through faith in Christ. He was, of course, familiar with the Psalms and the best Hebrew literature, but he did not succeed through it in rising to the fuller life. He needed a force, an impulse, coming upon him from without and lifting him above the barriers which fenced him in on every side.

If we turn to the memorable utterances of remarkable men, we shall find this sudden expansion and exaltation of the life frequently spoken of. It buoys up Luther, so that he speaks with overflowing spirit of the delight of Christian liberty. Milton describes with exultation the noble freedom which came from the rediscovery of Scripture and its circulation in the tongues of modern Europe. Even scientific discovery may sometimes seem like the passing from a close room into the open air. Thus Sir Francis Galton declares that to him the discoveries of Darwin brought a feeling of exultant freedom. In all these cases it is not the freedom of lawlessness which gives delight. It is the exchange of a hard and external compulsion, a rule which has no root in sympathy, for a government understood, appreciated, seen to be for the best. The new bounds may seem to the world outside as narrow as the old, but the difference lies in the fact that they are accepted with love and sympathy, so that one does not wish to break them. It is like passing from an attempt to write verse in a foreign language to an attempt to write in one's own, only keeping the gentle laws of cadence and rhyme, the mild pressure of which makes writing all the easier.

Chapter III

ST PAUL'S CALL

I

As we find in the writings of Paul's companion and biographer a somewhat unsatisfactory account of his conversion, so we find a confused account of his call to the apostleship. Each of the three narratives of the catastrophe at Damascus, in Acts ix., xxii., and xxvi., is followed immediately by an account of a special call of Paul to the ministry among Gentiles or Greeks. In Acts ix. the Lord is reported to have said to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings." In Acts xxii. it is stated that after the conversion Paul returned to Jerusalem; and that, as he was praying in the temple, he received the commission, "I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles." In Acts xxvi., on the appearance of Jesus on the road to Damascus, he declares to Paul that he is to be sent to the Gentiles, "that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." It is very difficult to reconcile these passages with Paul's own statement that on leaving Damascus he spent a long time in Arabia.

We may well imagine that he craved a period of quiet for reflection, and for transferring his life to its new basis.

The above, however, are not the only occasions, according to Luke, when Paul's mission to the Gentiles was made plain to him. In Acts xiii. 46 it is related how, at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas preached first to the Jews, and then, when they were found to be irreconcilable, said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." And even at the end of Paul's missionary career, when he reaches Rome, he begins by appealing to the Jews resident there, and only on their rejection of him, exclaims, "This salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles: they will also hear."

Now, it is quite impossible, in a historic fashion, to reconcile these various statements, or to determine at what point in the missionary career of Paul he finally became convinced that he was sent specially to the Gentiles. Considering the intensity of his Jewish national feeling, it must have required an immense pressure of conviction before he would give way to a tendency naturally so repugnant to him. There is much to be said for the view that it was only the constantly repeated experience that his message was refused by the Jews, but eagerly welcomed by the Greeks, which drove him to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. In that case the three passages in Acts first cited can have little historic justification, while

the two latter passages may at least reflect the truth. The fact is that the writer of Acts is remarkably susceptible to ideas, but has little care in regard to chronology. Recognising what the position of Paul had become at the time when he was writing, that the Apostle was entirely identified with the admission of Greeks to the Christian Church, he carries back that idea to the very beginning of Paul's career. In so doing he commits an anachronism, but shows the underlying current in the spiritual world, which, in spite of the loves and hates, the scruples and the struggles of individuals, was bearing the Christian ship towards the wide ocean of universal religion.

In the present brief treatise I can only give summaries; I cannot fully work out the historic evidence. In addition to his account of Paul's call to missionary work among the heathen, Luke gives us much information in regard to the attitude of the Apostles at Jerusalem and the Jewish Christian Church towards the admission of Gentiles to Christian privileges; that is, direct admission, without passing through the forecourt of conformity to the Jewish law. According to Luke, it was not Paul who first claimed the admission of Gentiles on equal terms, but Peter, who did not require the household of Cornelius to submit to any Jewish rite, when he found that without such preliminary the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, so that they spoke with tongues and glorified God. And in the Lucan account of the Council at Jerusalem, not only does Peter take the side of Paul in this matter, but neither James nor

any of the original Apostles offers any opposition. But there is, as every student of Acts is aware, the greatest difficulty in accepting these accounts as historic in the face of the absolutely irreconcilable account of the attitude of James and Peter given us in the Galatian Epistle. It is clear, as criticism has long ago established, that Luke, in his anxiety to act as mediator and peacemaker, and to represent the inspiration of the early Church in the loftiest light, has smoothed over many divergencies of opinion among the Apostles, and written a history which is ideal rather than accurate. It is not necessary that I should here dwell on a theme so well worn, more especially since it is not the history of the early Church which is my subject, but the deeds and thought of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Let us turn from Acts to the Pauline Epistles, to see how this question of the mission to the Gentiles is there dealt with. In Romans it is justified by all the arts of Rabbinic logic: a fortification is raised against those of Paul's own countrymen who were determined to assert their Jewish privileges, even against the Christians of Jerusalem who were able to point out with what care Jesus himself had observed the commandments of the Hebrew law. In Galatians the same contention is asserted by Paul with a depth of passion and a force of energy which show that he was really roused. There can be no doubt that when the Apostle wrote those two letters, he regarded the admission of Gentiles to the faith of Christ as a matter *stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*. It may be, however, that we can trace our

way back to an earlier phase of his religious conviction, and that the appeal to the Gentiles was rather a later result of his conversion and calling than a datum of the same time and authority as his great change of life.

It has been observed that in the earliest of the Pauline Epistles—1 Thessalonians—there is little or nothing of this insistence on the merely transitory character of the Jewish law. And even in the later Epistles, such as Romans, there are curious relapses, in which the Apostle speaks of the law as we should expect a pious Jew to speak.[1] If we believe that Luke was the author of Acts, and so a frequent witness of Paul's working as a missionary, we shall find it scarcely possible to reject his testimony that in each city which Paul visited, the Jewish Synagogue was the centre of his operations. In fact, if we consider the intense force of the Jewish nationality in a man, and the mental habits of Paul's early life, we shall be slow to believe that he always felt and acted in accordance with the conviction so impressively stated in Galatians and Romans of the religious equality in Christ between Jew and Gentile. We may cite a parallel case. Paul also says that in Christ the distinction between male and female disappears; yet he is very determined in his opposition to those women at Corinth who wished to draw from that principle the corollary that they had a right to speak in the public services of the Church. Paul was one of the last of mankind to be wholly self-consistent, or, as a recent writer on him has said of him, "to treat a subject from the point of view of its

[1] To this point we will return (p. 46).

fundamental principle, which he followed out to its logical consequences." I do not, in fact, regard it as at all impossible that he may at one time have caused Timothy, the son of a Jewish mother, to be circumcised, or have shaved his head at Cenchreæ with the four Nazarites, and at another time may have vehemently opposed the circumcision of Titus. Those rigid commentators who will not allow their hero to be inconsistent, or to say what is not appropriate, or to do what is unexpected, are in fact removing him from a world of flesh and blood to a gallery of plaster saints and objects of piety.

In fact, Paul's view of the admissibility of Gentiles into the Church sprang naturally, though perhaps not immediately, from his great doctrine of salvation by faith, from which it followed alike as a matter of reason and as a matter of history. Of reason, because Paul had dug down to the fundamental facts of man as a spiritual being, and had discovered that at that depth there was no line of division between Jew and Gentile. The fact of sin, the need of redemption, the possibility of salvation, were exactly the same in Jew and in Greek, and, in realising this fact, Paul had really climbed out of the narrow fold of Judaism into the wide pastures of humanity. And the historic nexus was as strong as the intellectual. Paul found by experience, again and again repeated, that the Gentiles were far more ready to receive his doctrine than the Jews; while of the Jews those who were most nationalist were the hardest of all to reach. Thus in a certain sense Luke is right. From the moment of Paul's conversion, his religious attitude

towards Jew and Greek was virtually fixed, though he only by degrees began to realise that this was the case.

What it cost Paul to take up this attitude towards the Jewish law, probably none but a Jew can realise. It was giving up all that the nation held most precious, its claim to distinction among the nations, the pledge of its special relation to God. In our day the change from faith to faith is easy; and, in spite of the growing force of the feeling of nationality, a man may without great loss give up one nationality for another. But in ancient times the man who gave up his nation gave up a great part of his moral being, and the man who left the deities of his fathers became an outcast. Paul had to leave his people and become accursed to all his kinsmen, and at the same time to break the visible ties which bound him to the God of Israel. He must indeed have had profound faith in the new revelation, thus to march out into the desert.

One knows how, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul reverts again and again to the Jewish law. On no subject are his inconsistencies so marked. At one time he speaks of it as holy, just, and good, the direct gift of God to Moses. Sometimes he speaks of it as marking a passing stage in the development of man, but now outworn and ready to pass away. Sometimes he seems even to regard it as provocative to sin, and unable to help a man in the trouble into which it leads him. Some writers have tried to maintain that Paul means to use the word *law* in several senses, sometimes for the divine or eternal law, sometimes for the mere outward ordinances of Judaism. That, however, is a distinction

which it would be difficult for a Jew to make or, at all events, to observe consistently. I shall not attempt to trace system or consistency in these sayings, which are usually so steeped in emotion that they cannot easily be analysed in a dry light. That has been the task of many a learned commentator: and it is doubtless a necessary task; but I prefer to give my attention rather to points which have been overlooked or less fully considered, but which, as I think, have for us an interest quite as great.

Writers from Augustine onwards who regard themselves as Pauline, are apt to dwell upon the contrast between law and gospel, between the Jewish law and the good news or εὐαγγέλιον which came through Christ. And they carry back this contrast to Paul. But the fact is, as Harnack has shown,[1] that Paul never brings the two words "law" and "gospel" into contrast. But he has a great love for the term "gospel," which stands in his writings for his great teaching of salvation by faith. This is the good news which he has to proclaim to men. The word is found in Isaiah, in chap. lxi., which begins, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." This very verse is quoted by Luke (iv. 18) as applied by Jesus to himself at Nazareth; and the whole context in which it appears was appropriated by nascent Christianity as a prophecy of its appearance. It seems almost certain that when Paul speaks of *good tidings* he must have had this passage in his mind.

[1] *Constitution and Law of the Church*, p. 301.

II

From the time of his conversion, Paul felt a new and higher life grow and expand within him; he felt himself possessed by a mighty spiritual force working through him on the world. In the Epistles this conviction is frequently expressed in burning words, showing a power of belief which cannot be gainsaid. With the new life came a mission in the world; and with the mission an endless flow of power, which bore him willingly along.

The sense of this personal inspiration is nowhere expressed with more energy and conviction than in the opening of the Epistle to the Galatians. Paul felt himself an apostle, not from man, nor through men, but through Jesus Christ. His message came from no apostle, but by a direct revelation from his Master. But the force which made him an apostle was no hard compulsion, but one which arose from a passion of love within: the love of Christ constrains him.[1] To the world the reality of his mission was attested by the power which worked within him. The strength of Christ rests on him and dwells in him.[2] If he comes to Corinth, he says he will not spare, but let the disciples see the power of Christ which is in him,[3] and which is the power of God. Christ works mightily in him, even to the performance of miracles.[4] It is by the power of the indwelling Christ that Paul has been able to endure all the labours and sufferings

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14.
[2] 2 Cor. xii. 9.
[3] *Ibid.* xiii. 3.
[4] Rom. xv. 18.

of his past life, the watchings and travail, the shipwrecks and scourgings and stoning. Suffering has come upon him beyond measure, but it is not his own suffering, but the suffering of Christ in his person. Sometimes he speaks even with a sense of awe of this inner power, and trembles lest it may utterly crush those whom he feels it necessary to rebuke to their faces.

Only in one or two passages does he use a tone of more diffidence. It is in the manner of the man that such expressions should come as a reaction after extreme confidence. After the passionate claim of a personal inspiration at the opening of the Galatian Epistle, he narrates his visit to Jerusalem, after fourteen years of preaching, when he laid before the chief Apostles privately the substance of his Gospel, "lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." If the highest authorities of the infant Church had openly condemned Paul's teaching, we cannot for a moment suppose that he would have given it up. But an open schism might have taken place. This experience the Church, by divine mercy, was spared, for the authorities of Jerusalem gave Paul the sanction of at least a modified approval.

A parallel passage will be found in 1 Cor. ix. There, again, the Apostle has fallen into a strain of self-confidence, narrating how, by adapting himself to individuals, he has secured the success of his mission. The reaction soon comes. First, he disclaims all merit in preaching the Gospel, seeing that he does so from an inward necessity rather than from choice. And

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presently his intense feeling of spiritual unworthiness is still more clearly shown: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have made proclamation to others, I myself should be rejected."[1] Such oscillation between a complete confidence in the divine character of a mission, and the ever-reviving feeling of personal unworthiness, and a longing for sympathy, is of frequent occurrence in the lives of saints.

The nature of this personal inspiration is a very difficult question. To the historian we must at once make the concession that it did not take Paul outside the stream of tendency and effect. It did not make him cease to be a man of his age, a Jew, a Pharisee. It did not at a blow destroy the effects of education and of mental temperament. And we may further concede that the Apostle himself in some ways overestimated its power. As so often in the case of Paul, we may see how practical necessities shaped his way of thinking. That he should maintain his independence of the Apostles at Jerusalem was a necessity for the success of his mission to the Gentiles. And the profound consciousness of this necessity led him somewhat to exaggerate his autonomy, and to insist upon it that he was "an apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ."

It seems, then, that Paul did claim an exceptional inspiration, an unusual directness of communication

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27. The word "castaway" in the A.V. is misleading. The Greek ἀδόκιμος seems to mean "rejected as a competitor," and carries on the comparison to the games.

with Christ. To most Christians, to partake of the life of the Church was the only way in which they could share the new and divine inspiration. But to himself visions and inspirations were granted, and direct instructions as to the way in which the life of the community might be furthered. He claimed to be an apostle, holding a direct commission from his heavenly Master, which made disobedience to his words a crime, and which entitled him to punish the mutinous. This power was not derived from the Church. And thus Paul has become the model and prototype of all those who in subsequent times have felt a call to assert an inspiration which came not from men but from God, who have claimed in virtue of a special commission the right to reform, to reorganise, and to resist the constituted powers in the Church.

Our modern psychology will support the view that such personal inspiration is a reality. There is nothing in which man differs more from man than in the power of a personal converse with the invisible. Such power is almost like a sixth sense; like the faculty by which a dragon-fly at the moment when it sheds its old husk assumes all the faculties of a winged creature, or the instinct which guides a rare butterfly to seek its mate at a distance of many miles. An inner consciousness of the working of the power which is ever moulding man and guiding the course of his development is given to some men and withheld from others according to principles which we cannot fathom. Some men seem capable of receiving impulses from an underlying

life, as the iron rod is adapted to receive the lightning, which turns it in a moment from an inert bar of metal into a vehicle of an unmeasured force. Other men, abler, wiser, more agreeable to mankind, have no such potentiality. The course of history is guided by the few who have an inward sense of what is really for the good of mankind, and will tend to further the divine ideals in the race. And if a nation does not choose to listen to such men, it goes into the ways of senility and decay. If it neglects and despises the prophets, their blood is required of it, and nothing is before it but a bitter repentance or a profound humiliation.

Paul's faith cannot be fully understood unless we remember that it was caused and sustained by direct communications, or what he believed to be such, from his Master in heaven. We have indeed reason to think that his biographer exaggerates alike the frequency and the definiteness of these monitions. So reasonable a worker as Paul would not too much subordinate his plans and his actions to an internal monition. That is the way of enthusiasts, but not of one who has such remarkable moderation of mind and practical sense as Paul. We read in Acts,[1] "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia; and the spirit of Jesus suffered them not," and so forth. Without being dogmatic on the subject, since the operation of the Spirit is hard to trace, I should be disposed in such passages to see the

[1] xvi. 6.

views of Luke rather than of Paul. But we have in the Epistles at least two accounts of definite communication between the spirit of Paul and that of his Master. In 2 Cor. xii. Paul speaks of a mystic ascent to heaven, and of the hearing from the Lord of words which he will not repeat.[1] And a little further on he states that, being troubled by an infirmity of the flesh, and praying for its removal, he received from his Master the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Moreover, Paul expected nearly all through his life the speedy appearance of his Master in glory, to put an end to the existing state of things, and to receive him into a new and glorious existence. Thus his faith was far more closely connected with sight and with experience than could be that of most of his spiritual descendants. Nevertheless, though his confidence was such as can scarcely have known a doubt, he is essentially the prototype of later heroes of the Christian faith. The words in which he expresses his enthusiasm of faith have been adopted by many since, though doubtless after a harder struggle: "That I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death."[2]

[1] *Not* "unspeakable words," as in the R.V. To this point I will return in the next chapter.

[2] Philip. iii. 9–10.

III

It is not easy to put into words the profound meaning which the Apostle attached to these phrases. To him Christ was a sublime spiritual Being who had been with God from eternity, who had been the planner and architect of the world, but who in the person of Jesus had descended from his divine dignity and had become man. Not *a* man, but man. In him the human race was united and summed up, so that in the sight of God he stood for it. With him man, the human race, died upon the cross, accepting death as the meed of sin, and with him the human race rose again from the dead, rose as a redeemed and sanctified humanity. The new life which sprang from the sepulchre of Christ was potentially that of all; but every man must, in order to partake of it, lay hold upon Christ, claim the merit of his sufferings, continue upon earth his life of self-surrender.

Such is Paul's view of faith in Christ. The new life, however, though it must be voluntarily laid hold of by each individual, was incorporated in the Church, the visible body of Christ upon earth, the bride of Christ, whom he had bought with his blood. And the Church had as the sign and seal of her life, not faith alone, but certain sacred rites, sacraments of fidelity, cleansing and purifying acts, through which, as through a gate, men passed into the full fruition of the life eternal.

But in the mind of Paul everything tended to ethics, to conduct. The life of believers on earth must be marked by the virtues of Christ: by gentleness, meek-

ness, temperance, love. Such righteousness was essential; but it was not to be gained by any following of precept, or any effort of will, but only by partaking of the new life, which flowed towards Christian perfection as rivers towards the sea.

And the Apostle was convinced that those who die to sin with Christ and rise with him will die no more. There is no longer in them anything which death can touch. There is in them the spring of immortality, ever rising afresh, not to be dried by suffering or by death. It is in the union with Christ that Paul places the Christian hope of immortality. Those who are in Christ shall, whether they have died, or whether they are still alive at the coming of the Lord, be caught up to meet him in the air, and so be ever with the Lord. It will, of course, be observed that nothing is said as to the rest of mankind; of them Paul does not speak. He has no general doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Those who are not in Christ have not in them the principle of life, and will have no part in the glorified realm of the future. They will doubtless perish. Paul does not, like his Master, speak of a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth: the future of those who are not Christians lies not in hell, but in extinction.

In thus sketching the outline of Paul's faith in Christ, and of his salvation by faith, I have of necessity anticipated something of what is to come in future chapters. I must speak in succession of the various outgrowths of faith in Christ, and their embodiment in Pauline doctrine. But before doing so I must try to

set forth the historic origin and connections of the belief. It would be a mistake to suppose that nothing of the type had ever before existed in the world. Like all great leaders and discoverers, Paul amplifies, raises, transforms ideas and beliefs which already existed in the world. He builds in some degree on old foundations the magnificent structure of the Christian Church with its sacraments, its ethics, its hopes.

Chapter IV

THE PAULINE MYSTERY

I

We now arrive at the crucial point of the present treatise, which was originally suggested by the discovery that the word "mystery" and the ideas which it conveys play a much larger part than is generally recognised in the writings and the thought of St Paul. It is necessary, in the first place, to consider the meaning of the word in the time of Paul.

It is very usual, and indeed very natural, that readers of the English version of the Bible should attach to the words used a meaning current in our own time, but not belonging to the time of the Biblical writers. This is not the fault of the translators. As it is impossible to render in one language with absolute precision the phrases of another language, so, and in a higher degree, it is impossible to express in current modern phrases the thoughts of men belonging to another civilisation, and writing amid entirely different surroundings. The word "mystery" implied institutions, societies, and ideas quite familiar to the people of the Mediterranean

in the ages of Greek and Roman dominance. Among us, since we have no mysteries in the ancient sense of the word, the term has been altered and degraded in meaning. The adjective "mysterious," which really governs the modern sense of the noun "mystery," is defined in some dictionaries as meaning "difficult or impossible to understand; obscure; not revealed or explained; enigmatical; incomprehensible." But, strictly speaking, it should mean "of or belonging to the Mysteries"; and what the Mysteries were was in ancient times known more or less to everyone, whether educated or uneducated.

There were among the Greeks and Romans public cults of the national and civic deities, which were exposed freely to the light of day, which were the occasion of public holidays, and which were openly celebrated, though often the ritual was governed by tradition, and was very imperfectly understood, even by those who took part in it. And there was also a class of private cults, to which only those were admitted who were qualified by passing certain tests, which were carried on in secret, and the order and procedure of which was not to be spoken of, except among the votaries themselves. These latter were called Mysteries.

How the Mysteries arose, and why they were kept secret, is readily explained when we consider that, according to the primitive religious ideas accepted among the Mediterranean nations, the practice of religious rites had in itself such virtue that it gained hold of the supernatural beings towards whom it was directed, and brought them into direct relations with

the worshippers. When a conquering race swept over a country, dividing out its lands, and reducing the previous owners to a condition of vassalage, it was a great thing if the vanquished could manage to hide from their new masters the proper way in which the local deities must be adored, and so to prevent the new domination from being absolute. For the local deities remained in possession of the land amid all changes of masters; and those who had the power of securing their favours could never be despised. Thus originally it is probable that secret cults or Mysteries belonged rather to the aboriginal and lower strata of the population, while conquering races had less interest in hiding their cults. Of course, this origin is not the only one. But, speaking generally, one may say that the secret cults of the ancient world belonged to the lower races in origin, though some of them in course of time acquired a high degree of respectability, as did the Eleusinian Mysteries in Attica, and those of Andania in Messenia.

In what is termed the Hellenistic age of Greece, between the time of Alexander and the Roman conquest, the civic cults of the Greek deities, with their public festivals and their open worship, fell into decay; and their place was in a great degree taken, both in Western Asia and Eastern Europe, by an invasion of religious cults of the more secret class from the East. There was a steady growth of what one may perhaps call Hellenic Nonconformity. And these cults, which were by no means new, indeed were often very primitive, grew greatly in their vogue

and the numbers of their adherents. The Mysteries which they cherished consisted of knowledge or ceremonies, formulæ or symbols, reserved for votaries, who were initiated into the worship of some deity, after undergoing the preliminary tests. These phrases or ceremonies might be simple enough, some formula which the leader of the mystæ repeated to his followers, some ceremony in which all took a part. But, however simple, they must not, under pain of divine displeasure, be communicated to those without.

I have said that these cults came "from the East." The phrase is a vague one; it would be far more satisfactory to speak precisely; but our knowledge is very imperfect, and it is difficult to increase it. One centre of them was Phrygia, where they were connected with the worship of Sabazius and that of the great nature goddess commonly called Cybele. The worship of Isis, at all events outside Egypt, and that of Mithras also gave rise to those societies. But they spread as far west as Italy. The Roman religion, being closely connected with the state, could not readily make terms with them. Yet even the Roman law tolerated sacred *sodalitates* or societies of men and women bound together by the common worship of some deity, whose connection was so close that one member of a society of the sort could not appear as prosecutor of another, nor even act as juror in a case where another was interested. They also had common burial-grounds, and regular festival days.[1]

[1] Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, 1885, p. 137. In these respects the Roman *sodalitates* were prototypes of the Christian

Men of higher spiritual character, or greater intellectual power, would naturally attach to phrase or action a deeper meaning. They would use it as a symbol in which they might see the expression of deep truths in regard to the divine nature, and man in relation to the divine. Thus the Mysteries led on naturally to *mysticism*.

The term "mysticism" is far more at home amid modern surroundings than the word "mysteries"; for, in the strict, ancient sense of the word, the Mysteries are extinct among us. But mysticism is a phase of all religions at all times. The adjective "mystical" has not for us the same meaning as the word "mysterious," though the two come from the same source. If an event or a phrase puzzled us, we should say that it was mysterious, not that it was mystical. For the word "mystical" is used in a higher and more exclusive sense in regard to religious practice and belief.

Scarcely any two great writers interpret the term "mysticism" in the same way. But from the definitions which they give[1] it would seem specially to involve three things: first, a profound consciousness of a close relation between the human and the divine spirit; second, a symbolical interpretation of religious cult and practice as merely imaging or adumbrating what is spiritual; and third, a similar interpretation of words and formulæ, as not enclosing higher truth, but being

society. It is interesting to compare the Pauline teaching that a Christian should never go to law with a brother in the faith.

[1] A summary of these will be found in Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism*, Appendix A.

merely an imperfect and halting way of expressing that which in its fullness cannot be expressed.

That mysticism should arise out of, or at least be fostered by, the Mysteries is very natural. As Aristotle says, those who partook of the Mysteries did not learn anything, but were put in a frame of mind.[1] They were suggestive rather than informing. Every votary took from them what he was capable of taking: the superstitious and materialistic believed in them as a magic; the truly religious thought that through them men could become partakers of the divine nature. It is this vagueness and variety of interpretation which makes it very hard to set forth the character of the Greek Mysteries with any clearness. And it accounts for the very various estimates in which they have been held both by ancient and modern thinkers. Plato was a great mystic, yet he writes of the Orphic Mysteries with contempt, as tending to put mere ceremony in the place of a cleansing of the spirit. In the same way in the Roman Church of our own day, we see all levels of belief, from the simple trust of the Italian or Spanish peasant in the objective efficacy of the rites of the Church, and the miraculous working of the sacred elements, to the spirituality which finds in those rites a mere necessary basis in the material world for a life of union with the divine.

This is not a place for any exact historic account of the Greek Mysteries, still less for an exposition of the higher mysticism connected with them, the concisest

[1] Aristotle, as quoted by Synesius; the phrase is οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖν ἀλλὰ παθεῖν.

account of which would fill a volume. All that I can attempt is, first, briefly to set forth what is, by the general consent of scholars, regarded as the essential character of the Mysteries; and, second, to consider in what relation the teaching of St Paul as set forth in his Epistles stands towards these underlying ideas. Obviously, this is but a section of the great subject of the whole relation of early Christianity to them.

The Mysteries of the Hellenistic world are institutions of which the ordinary well-educated reader finds it hard to form any conception. Their mixture of sensuality and asceticism, of barbarous survival and earnest aspiration, is foreign to the modern mind; and there is no great classical work which can be read to impress their character on the imagination. Historians and archæologists have written learned works about them; but these do not come within the horizon of the ordinary reader. Even the trained investigator is repelled by the slight and scattered character of our evidence in regard to the Mysteries, and the vague and often contradictory information which may be thence derived.

Only one classical book helps us much, the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. In the eleventh book of that curious work we may read how the hero, Lucius, who by magic had been transformed into an ass, regains his human shape by the intervention of the goddess Isis, and becomes a devoted adherent of her Mysteries. He is sleeping on the seashore at Corinth when a glorious female form arises from the waves and promises him her aid in reply to his prayers. It is the great goddess

Nature, a goddess of many names, who prefers to be worshipped in the form of Isis. She instructs Lucius how, in his bestial form, he is to take part in a procession of the next day, when, on eating a garland of roses borne by the chief priest of Isis, he will resume his human shape. "By my providence," she concludes, "the day of salvation is dawning on you. . . . Above all remember and retain in your heart, that the remaining space of your life on earth is dedicated to me. To me, by whose favour you return to human form, you owe all your existence. In my keeping you will live happy and honoured; and when, having fulfilled the allotted space of life, you shall go to the shades below, there also in that underworld I shine through the darkness . . . and you shall often adore me as your protectress." The event turns as Isis has foretold; on eating the roses Lucius returns to human form. The priest exclaims, "See how Lucius, freed from his former pains, triumphs happily over his evil fortune by the providence of great Isis! But if you would be safer and better guarded . . . (he adds, turning to the votary) dedicate yourself to the obedience of our religion, and take on you voluntarily the office of a servant; for when you begin to be servant of the goddess, then the more you will feel the delight of liberty." And the spectators cry out, "Happy man, and thrice happy, who, doubtless by the blamelessness and good faith of his previous life, has merited so conspicuous a divine favour, that being, as it were, born again he may be devoted to the sacred ministry."

But Lucius does not at once enter into the full service of Isis: he has to wait and fast and pray until she by visions shows that she considers him worthy to be initiated. Nor do the priests venture to accept him until the will of the deity is made clear. There follows a description of the ceremony of initiation. It begins with a morning sacrifice and a reading from the sacred books. Then comes baptism with an assurance of divine forgiveness. What follows the writer dares not state in detail. He only hints: "I came to the borders of death, I trod the threshold of Proserpina, and returned passing through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining with bright rays; I saw the gods above and the gods below, and adored them face to face. I have told you of things which, though you hear them, you cannot understand." Finally, the votary is clad in sacramental robes and set up, torch in hand, as representative of the sun for the contemplation of the Mystæ.

The whole account reminds us sometimes of the strange tenets of the Gnostics, sometimes of the processions in honour of the Virgin, which still prove so exciting to the peasantry of Spain and Italy. But it is, in addition, full of valuable information as to the later religion of paganism. And though Apuleius wrote as late as A.D. 150, we cannot suppose that he shows any influence of Christianity on the Mysteries of Isis, which followed ancient Egyptian precedents.

Another valuable document of the religions of Hellenism is that published by Dieterich as a Mithraic

liturgy.[1] In my opinion it is not properly a liturgy, though in part consisting of prayers, but rather an Apocalypse, and especially interesting as furnishing parallels to the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses. Also among the Egyptian papyri lately published by such scholars as Kenyon and Grenfell, many are tinged both with mysticism and with magic. The material at our disposal is far greater than that which was available when Lobeck wrote his noted *Aglaophamus*.

Some English writers who have spoken of this side of Greek religion[2] have approached it with a curiously inverted interest. The points in it which attract them are the rites which it has in common with savage cultus, survivals from a very early stage of society: they love to observe the relics of totemism, of tabu, of ghost-worship which may be traced in them. The higher and nobler elements which the Greek spirit added to a barbarian substratum do not interest them. But surely every religion is to be judged, not by what is lower in it, but by what is higher. It is a perversion of the Darwinian method to judge of cultus by what it contains of the stock of human superstitions, rather than by the way in which, out of mere superstition and primitive fear of the supernatural, it builds up a faith worthy of the best spirits of the community. It would not be fair in such a way to judge Chinese Buddhism, nor Indian spiritualism, nor any of the

[1] Dieterich, *Eine Mithras Liturgie*. Compare the *Transactions of the Society of Historical Theology*, 1903, p. 29.

[2] Such as Dr J. G. Frazer, Mr R. R. Marett, and Miss J. E. Harrison.

many forms of Christianity. And it is not fair thus to judge of the religion of later Greece, out of which emerged much which, when baptized into Christ, is among our most cherished possessions.

It is very hard to trace the line which divides later Greek Mysticism from Christian Gnosticism. In fact no hard line can be drawn. The Gnostic sects stand for an attempt to transfer to the fold of Christianity the syncretic ideas of what may be called Hellenistic theology, with its mystic sacraments, its speculations as to the nature of the divine and the human, its old-world rites and beliefs, its astrological science, and its symbolical art. But it was only the excess of these things which the Church rejected: she absorbed by degrees a great part of the mystic spirit. Had she refused to do so, she would have thrown away the fruits won by the efforts of many generations of earnest, though perverted, seekers after God. The ordinary notion of the Gnostics, that they were speculative thinkers led away by a perverse use of the intellect, is very partial. They represented rather the tendency to quit Greek philosophy as an insufficient way of studying the divine, and to seek such a way by means of asceticism, sacrament, or ecstasy. The speculative part of their teaching was less important, and was largely developed on practical grounds, just as was the orthodox faith, which at the same time opposed them and absorbed much of their tendency.

As the best points in the Mysteries were absorbed by Christianity, so the worse passed into magic, magic which always appears as the dark shadow cast by

religion, and which takes the place of religion in the view of those who have not in them the seeds of religious growth. A defeated religion often thus disappears, and continues a sort of subterranean existence in remote places and among backward races. In documents such as Dieterich's Mithraic Liturgy, however, the religious and the magical are so confused that it is almost impossible to separate them.

The Mysteries best known in Greece were those of Demeter and her daughter at Eleusis. These have been the subject of much research in recent times. And although their details often baffle the inquirer, scholars are agreed that the kernel of the Mysteries consisted in a few symbolic actions and words, combined probably with a drama in which the departure of Persephone to the world of shades and her return were represented. Those who took part in the Mysteries were convinced that by sharing the grief and the triumph of Demeter, they prepared the way for their own reception in the future world.

Mysteries of many kinds abounded in the pagan world in the time of Paul, their attraction to the religious and the superstitious having become stronger as the tribal cults of antiquity fell into decay. There were Mysteries of the Cabeiri, of Orpheus, of Isis, of Mithras, and many more. And a notable point in which they resembled Christianity, and prepared a way for it, was that they belonged, not, like the cults of the great deities of Hellas and Asia, to cities and states, but to groups of votaries attracted from all peoples and tribes, and bound together only by their relation to

their deity. By that bond, they, as a society, stood apart from the rest of mankind.

Space fails me to speak of the pagan Mysteries in any detail. But I may repeat the summary made by a recent judicious writer[1] on the subject, who observes that the Mysteries have three notable characteristics. First, all have some rites of purification, whether ceremonial or moral, through which the Mystæ have to pass. Second, they are all Mysteries of communion with some deity, who through them comes into relation with his votaries. Third, all extend their view beyond the present life to that which is to come, and secure for the initiated a happy reception in the world which lies beyond the grave. In all these points, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters, Christianity resembles them and supersedes them. The same writer gives five reasons for the prevalence of the Mysteries under the Roman Empire.[2] These are: first, that they were ancient, and therefore venerable; second, that they were full of that obscurity which most people confuse with profundity; third, that they suited the pessimistic outlook of the time, which was everywhere seeking for a better hope; fourth, that they were built upon a sense of sin and misery; fifth, that they brought in a hope of a future life. It is observable that it was precisely these needs and conditions which ensured the triumph of Christianity. But there was surely a deeper cause for the prevalence of the Mysteries, of which those I have mentioned are but phases. If one travels on a

[1] Anrich, *Das antike Mysterienwesen*, p. 37.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–39.

river in a steamboat, one sees the water on the banks fall away before its approach, to be flooded shortly after by the waves which follow the boat. So before times of religious awakening, times of fresh inspiration, there comes a wave of depression and dissatisfaction. The hearts of men are made empty, that they may be filled with a new enthusiasm; and into the vacant room many spirits, good and bad, try to make their way.

II

Such being the nature of the Greek Mysteries, let us next turn to Jewish and Christian documents before the time of St Paul, and see how far the word "mystery," and the ideas which it implies, had obtained a footing on the soil in which the Christian Church first arose.[1] The Greek word μυστήριον is not used in the Septuagint, except in the book of Daniel. In that book and in the Apocrypha it is used repeatedly, and in two senses. Often it merely stands for anything secret, which should be spoken of only to the proper persons, the secret plan of a campaign, or a man's private affairs. In two cases,[2] it is used in the proper sense, in reference to the sacred cults of the heathen. It does not seem to be used in relation to the special worship of Israel: Mysteries of God are spoken of, but not any specially Jewish Mysteries.

In one passage in the Synoptists,[3] the knowledge

[1] The passages in question are all put together in an Appendix to Dean Armitage Robinson's *Commentary on Ephesians*, pp. 234–240.

[2] Wisdom, xiv. 15, 23.

[3] Mark iv. 11, and parallel passages.

of the Kingdom of God is spoken of as a mystery hidden from the many, and reserved for the inner circle of believers. But such an utterance is scarcely in the manner of Jesus, and we must probably regard it as one of the later additions, such as are found even in our earliest Gospels. Generally speaking, in the Synoptic discourses the teaching is as simple as it is noble. Jesus rejoices that things hitherto hidden from the wise were now revealed even to babes. The meaning of the Parables, though they may be called symbolical teaching, is seldom obscure: they have to do with simple and elementary truths. And if the wise cannot receive them, it is not because such matters surpass their understanding, but because the wise have hardened their hearts and stopped their ears.

There is one passage in the Apocalypse[1] in which μυστήριον occurs in a noteworthy sense: "Then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets." The meaning here seems to be that with the blast of the seventh angel the hidden purpose of God, which He had made known only to the prophets of the Christian Church, became evident in the world. Here the word is used in a way closely parallel to that of the Greeks; for the heathen societies generally had special teaching in regard to the relation of God to the world. In other passages in the Apocalypse[2] the word is used to denote a symbolical appearance which requires explanation by one who is initiated in its

[1] x. 7. [2] i. 20; xvii. 5, 7.

meaning: such appearances as those of the seven stars and of the woman seated on a scarlet beast. Such exhibitions of symbols, which only a hierophant could explain, appear to have been usual in the Mysteries of Eleusis and elsewhere. The Johannine Apocalypse is in truth a revealing to the members of a sacred society, the early Church, of secret truth in regard to the world and its destiny. A parallelism to the Greek Mysteries is as clearly present here as it is clearly absent from the Old Testament, excepting the book of Daniel.

Turning from the Synoptic Gospels to the Pauline writings, we find ourselves in a new region, as regards many sides of religion, and particularly as regards that side of it which is turned towards the Mysteries. In the first place it is worthy of note, as has indeed often been pointed out, that Paul uses words and phrases which belong to the Mysteries. Even if he does not use them in their special sense, the very fact of their occurring to him is important. Such words are τέλειος, properly applied to a person fully initiated, and μυεῖσθαι, which means to learn the secret imparted in the Mysteries. φωτίζειν, which is used in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is a word used to express the illumination which comes from the secret rites. How widely the use of such terms was spread is shown by the use in James (iii. 6), one of the least mystic books of the New Testament, of the phrase "wheel of birth," which belongs in origin to the Orphic Mysteries.

We should naturally expect that when Paul uses the

word "mystery" he would use it, primarily and ordinarily, as referring rather to what was the property of a particular society, and not to be revealed to the world, than to what is hard to understand. And this we find to be the case. No doubt mysteries in the Christian Church are also mystic, have to do with the obscurer relations between God and man, but the other meaning is predominant.

Generally when Paul speaks of mysteries he refers to something specially revealed by God and belonging to the Church, to those initiated into the faith of Christ. When he uses the word in the plural, "mysteries," he sometimes thus means the doctrines or rites which belong to the Christian Church as such. Thus he calls himself and his colleagues treasurers or dispensers (*οἰκονόμους*) of the divine mysteries.[1] He speaks of charity as better than the knowledge of mysteries.[2] He uses the plural when he calls the speaking in tongues a speaking of mysteries[3] where he appears to mean that what was spoken was understood only by the speaker, was his private secret, and had to be explained to hearers by an interpreter.

Paul mentions it as a Christian mystery[4] that at the coming of Christ some shall arise from sleep, and some shall be changed. This is a mystery, not in the sense of being anything hard to understand—for the notion of a spiritual body was widely accepted in Greek speculation of the time,—but as a belief peculiar to Christians, and the secret of their confidence in the

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 1. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
[3] 1 Cor. xiv. 2. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

future, but not a belief lightly to be spoken of to unbelievers. Paul also, in agreement with some of his Jewish contemporaries, regards the special relation of the Jewish race to God as a mystery, a racial secret. But naturally he does not regard it in the same light as the Alexandrian Jews. The phase of Israel's relation to God which to him is specially striking is that for the time Israel is hardened in unbelief,[1] though eventually the race must doubtless find its salvation.

There is, however, a mystery of Christianity which is at the heart of it, the great mystery by partaking of which a man becomes a member of the Christian community. When Paul speaks of this mystery he becomes reticent, and hints rather than expresses his meaning. Perhaps he does not like to commit it explicitly to writing which may perhaps fall into the wrong hands. It may be, too, that he finds it difficult to speak of things which call up in himself over-mastering emotions. He probably felt like Luther when he said, "If thou truly feelest this in thy heart, it will be so great a thing to thee that thou wilt rather keep silence than say aught of it." Thus it is not strange that in the great Pauline Epistles the nature of the Christian mystery is usually rather assumed to be understood than expounded. In the latest of the Epistles, however, as we shall see, we find a clearer statement.

I think that the commentators have usually been mistaken in regard to the great Pauline mystery. Some have regarded the Messiahship of Jesus Christ as

[1] Rom. xi. 25.

the Pauline mystery. Another usual view is that "the mystery *par excellence* has a special reference to the Gentiles, that in fact it is nothing less than the inclusion of the Gentiles as well as the Jews in a common hope in Christ."[1] Of course this was one of the chief features of Paul's ministry, and he speaks of it in close connection with his great secret; but it is not that secret itself. It is the part of the great divine plan which is specially given to him to disclose to the world, but it is not the pearl of great price. This I shall try to show by considering the passages in which the great mystery is mentioned.

The most important of these, in the Epistles of the second group, is 1 Cor. ii. 1–10. There Paul sets forth how he had proclaimed among them the mystery of God. This mystery, he says, was not known to the rulers of the world, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the glorious Lord of the Christian faith. But Paul knew it, and he set it forth, not in the words of an enticing theosophy or gnôsis, but in the simplest terms. It would seem that some Christian teacher, perhaps Apollos, had been setting forth the Christian faith in terms of a philosophy like that of Alexandria. If the mystery could have been thus reached, it would not, Paul implies, have remained unknown to the rulers of the world. A wisdom of a more real and practical kind is revealed by the Spirit of God, and leads those who accept it not to crucify, but to adore the crucified.

These words will not apply to any such doctrine

[1] Armitage Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 238.

as the opening of the Church to the Gentiles. The mystery of which Paul speaks is a saving and renovating relation to the crucified Saviour, a perception of what he was to the Church. It stands in no contrast to a real and heavenly wisdom; but it has no relation to the wisdom of the world.

There is another important passage in the last verses of the Roman Epistle. Here, however, the interpretation is not easy; and the English revised version is scarcely intelligible. It runs, "Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but is now manifested. . . ."

The version of Sanday and Headlam[1] is clearer: "According to the Gospel that I proclaim, the preaching which announces Jesus the Messiah; that preaching in which God's eternal purpose, the mystery of his working, kept silent since the world began, has been revealed, a purpose which the prophets of old foretold, which has been preached now by God's express command, which announces to all the Gentiles the message of obedience in faith." The only objection to this version which I would venture to raise is that "preaching which announces Jesus the Messiah" does not give the force of *κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, since it implies that Paul's special mission was to proclaim the Messiahship of Jesus. To Paul "my message and the proclamation of Jesus Christ" went far beyond the mere assertion of the Messiahship, to the proclamation

[1] *Commentary on Romans*, p. 432.

of general salvation through Jesus Christ. It is, in fact, this salvation which is here spoken of as not only the substance of Paul's preaching, but a secret of God, hidden from men of the past, hinted at by the prophets, and now by the Spirit revealed to Paul and to all Christians.

Here, no doubt, strong emphasis is laid on the fact that salvation is offered to Gentile as well as to Jew. But that fact is not primary. The essential point is that God had of old planned the redemption of men in Jesus Christ, and partly revealed that intention by the prophets; but now openly proclaimed it through the preaching of Paul, as a way of life to all who should accept it and show their acceptance by practical life. This is the great mystery, hidden in the past, not to be reached by human wisdom, but now revealed.

It has been disputed whether this passage is authentic and whether it is rightly placed. There seems good reason for the supposition that the last chapter of Romans, full of greetings to old friends, must have been addressed rather to the Church at Ephesus than to that at Rome. And the sense of the passage before us belongs rather to the third than to the second group of Epistles. To these we next turn.

In the beginning of the Colossian Epistle we find, first (i. 27), the phrase "God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." A little later comes the phrase "that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

In the first passage "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is identified with the great mystery which God has revealed.[1] That mystery, the great secret treasure of the Church, is the indwelling of Christ, giving an earnest of glory to come, an indwelling which belongs alike to Jew and to Greek, who are in Christ one. The second passage asserts that in this unity with Christ lies a wisdom greater than that of the world, a knowledge or gnôsis which brings salvation. In another passage of the same Epistle (iv. 3) the Apostle asks for prayer that ways may be opened to him for the proclamation of the mystery of Christ. The Christian mystery then lies in a relation between the disciple and his heavenly Master. This he bears about with him as a sacred secret, the spring of conduct, and the ground of hope for the future.

Such a meaning comes out even more clearly in the Ephesian Epistle. In i. 9, 10 it is stated to be the hidden will of God—a will hidden from the world, but revealed to the Christian—that all things should be summed up in Christ, that he should be the head of all, and that in union with him all should find redemption. In iii. 6 the nature of the mystery is somewhat more explicated by the saying that this possession of Christ is common to Jew and Gentile. The old mystery of Israel's relation to God is superseded by a new mystery, in which the people of God is no longer a race, but a community consisting of all who believe in Jesus Christ. The community in Christ is further spoken of in v. 32 as a mysterious union which

[1] Or, with the glory of the mystery, which gives the same meaning.

may best be compared to an ideal earthly marriage in which husband and wife are both ready utterly to give themselves one for another. So "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it."

When these passages are put together, it becomes abundantly clear that the mystery of Paul was a sacred but secret belief in the existence of a spiritual bond holding together a society in union with a spiritual lord with whom the society had communion, and from whom they received in the present life safety from sin and defilement, and in the world to come life everlasting. This enthusiastic belief lies at the root of all the words and deeds of Paul: it is the basis of his existence. It is no system of doctrine, though we may call it the teaching of salvation by faith in Christ, but it is really a relation, the relation of Christ to the Church, and to every member of the Church. Better than by any statement of doctrine it is explained by figure and analogy, by the comparison of the relation of the head to the limbs, of the bridegroom to the bride. Like all the deepest truth it must be led up to, and shown from many points of view before we can hope to gain any true conception of it. It is both a doctrine of a mystery and a mystical doctrine.

III

The relation of Paul to the Mysteries of the ancient world is far-reaching. It is not only that Christianity, as he views it, has certain secrets which belong only to the believer. But in the very nature of those secrets,

and in the whole character of Christianity as understood by Paul, we may trace great and undeniable likeness to the pagan Mysteries. I do not mean to assert that he plagiarised from them. When he speaks of them it is in terms of the greatest dislike and contempt. It is not a field in which he would choose to dig, even for pearls of price. But every one who has studied the history of ideas must have learned that ideas are propagated from school to school and teacher to teacher less often by the direct borrowing which comes of admiration than by the parallel working of similar forces in various minds. When ideas are in the air, as the saying is, men catch them by a sort of infection, and often without any notion whence they come.

There can, however, be no question that the facts of the celebration of Mysteries, and the ideas for which they stood, would be frequently brought before the mind of St Paul. The two cities in which he dwelt a long while during his missionary career were in close connection with them. The Mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated on the road from Corinth to Athens, and must have taken place during Paul's stay at the former city. Ephesus was noted for being the headquarters of mystic religion in Asia.

To say that, with Paul, the Christian Church arose as a mystic sect, combined of Jewish and heathen elements, is to put the matter in a crude and exaggerated form. But the phrase may be regarded as a rough approximation to the truth.

We have already seen that three of the most essential features of the Greek mysteries were (1) they had rites

of purification and tests on entry into the society; (2) they had means of communication with some deity to whom they looked up as their head; (3) they extended their view beyond the present life into the world beyond the grave. In all these respects the Christianity of St Paul resembles them. In all these ways he moves away from the earliest teaching of Christianity towards the Church of the Roman Empire. These features of the Pauline teaching will be the subjects of the next chapters. But first I must point out in a general way some of the characteristics in which the Gospel of Paul has a mystic tinge, far as he is in spirit from the point of view of the Greek mystagogues.

The entrance to all the pagan mystic societies was fenced by rites of purification. And if we had asked what was meant by purification, they would have replied that it meant the domination of the flesh by the spirit. Now, there are few words which play a greater part in the Pauline Epistles than the words "flesh" and "spirit." But these are words which definitely belong to the religions of mysticism. The Orphic teachers of the Mysteries speak of the body as a prison-house in which the spirit is confined. They regard it as the source and root of evil, the weight which drags down the spirit into the mire of sense. Sometimes the language of Paul bears a striking resemblance to theirs; as when he writes, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," or "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He, too, is constantly dwelling on the degradation of the spirit through the evil tendencies of the flesh. But though the language of Paul is often

like that of Greek mysticism, his notion of the life of the spirit is very different. The Greek mystics scorned the body chiefly because it thwarted and limited the intellectual contemplation of the divine. Paul, with a far stronger tendency towards action, is hard upon the body because of the vices to which it leads men. The works of the flesh, he writes, are these :—and then follows a list of the foul vices which were rife in the great cities of the Roman world, and which hindered the higher and purer life in Christ. These are really very different ways of regarding the fleshly bondage. The Greek way did not in practice exclude the sensual life: the way of Paul was thrilled through and through with ethical passion, as we shall see more fully in a future chapter.

As purification was the gate of entry into the pagan mystic community, so the bond which held together the Hellenistic societies was communion with a saving deity. The deity of the society was a *θεὸς σωτήρ*; and the society sought through fellowship with him to reach a state of *σωτηρία*, safety or salvation, a salvation belonging alike to the present life and that beyond the grave.

The writer of Acts[1] says that a girl possessed with a prophetic spirit, or gift of second sight, at Philippi followed Paul and Silas, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation." This statement comes in the *we* narrative, and there can be little doubt that the teller of the tale was present, and speaks from memory.

[1] Acts xvi. 16.

The *Most High God* was a phrase which the people of Philippi would understand; Θεὸς Ὑψιστὸς was a title given in some places to Zeus, in some to Apollo, in some to Attis; but the idea seems of Eastern origin. Whether it were the influence of the Jewish Diaspora, scattered through the cities of the Roman Empire and Parthia, or whether other influences were at work, it is certain that a strong tendency to monotheism, or at all events to what Max Müller called henotheism, was widely spread: and the chief deity thus acknowledged received the title Hypsistus or Hypatus ("Highest"). When on Palmyrene incriptions we read of "dedication to the blessed name" of Zeus Most High, we seem in a familiar Jewish atmosphere. The deity thus spoken of was at Palmyra a form of the sun-god. But he was invested with the lofty attributes of the supreme deity. It is observed by Schürer, Cumont, and others[1] that whenever we find this word in ancient documents it seems to imply a Jewish, or at all events a Syrian, influence. It was very natural that Gentile proselytes or others attracted by the worship of Jehovah should have applied to him this term.

The people would also well understand the meaning of the word σωτηρία, salvation, as indicating that the Christian missionaries initiated men and women into a sacred society of communion. And here the girl spoke with insight as to the character of the Pauline teaching, whether she fully understood her own words or not.

[1] *Berl. Acad. Sitzungsber.*, 1897, p. 200; *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des Inscr.*, 1906, p. 63; also Dr Odgers, in *Proceed. of Soc. Histor. Theology*, 1905-6, pp. 65-75.

It is very instructive to examine by help of a Concordance, how the words "saviour," and "salvation" are used in the Bible. These words are familiar to readers of the Psalms and Prophets; but usually in an external sense. God saves Israel from his enemies: the king saves his people by arms or wisdom. An inward salvation is, however, sometimes implied, of which the God of Israel is the source; for in its best days the religion of Israel passed beyond the search for mere outward prosperity to desire an inner relation to Jehovah which should save the Israelite from his sins and from their inward consequences, should save not only the nation, but the spirit of every true Israelite. This is one of the great steps taken under the influence of the Jewish faith, bringing it to the very threshold of Christianity.

Among the pagans also the word had many gradations of meaning. We hear of Zeus Soter and Artemis Soteira as preserving cities from calamity. The care of the Gods saved men constantly in all the affairs of life. But as we approach the Christian era we find the words "save" and "salvation" applied in a more special way. It was the deities of the Mysteries who were in an emphatic sense the saviours of those who trusted in them, and they saved, by allowing the votary to have a share in their lives.[1]

The passages which I have cited from Apuleius will show generally what was involved in this idea

[1] Especially see the distich preserved for us by Firmicus Maternus:—

θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου·
ἔσται γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτηρία.

of salvation. The votary, by entering the society of the deity, and having communion with him, whether by recognised rites or by a personal revelation, partook of a new life in the spirit, was born afresh to an existence spiritual and no longer merely fleshly. By the leading of his protecting deity he was brought safe through the troubles of the present life. And he looked forward to a fuller revelation in the life beyond the grave. He would be guided through the perils of the spirit's migration after death, and find happiness in a more complete union with a divine protector. "As surely as Osiris lives," says an Egyptian text, "so surely shall his disciple."[1] If the reader will turn back to the passage cited from Apuleius, he will see how Isis bestows salvation on her votary, and promises him not only a happy life on earth but a favourable reception among the shades.

Let us turn to the New Testament. In Mark the words "saviour" and "salvation" do not occur. In the beautiful proem to Luke Simeon thanks God that his eyes have seen the divine salvation. And the angels tell the shepherds in the fields, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Further on,[2] Jesus says to Zacchæus, "To-day is salvation come to this house." So far there is nothing which has a very definite meaning. But when we read in Matthew, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," we see that to the writer the word

[1] Cumont, *Relig. orientales dans l'Emp. Romain*, p. 121.
[2] xix. 9.

"saviour" had already become closely connected with the name of Jesus, and in connection with an inner change of nature, not merely with national or personal prosperity. It is in this sense that Jesus came to be regarded as the head of a society of people who had found in him the secret of salvation. We know that all the Gospels were published at a time later than that of Paul's Epistles, and we may trace, though more rarely than we should have expected, Pauline influence in occasional phrases in them. And without venturing to be dogmatic on the point, I think it likely that a Pauline influence may be seen in this particular expression.

In the Pauline Epistles this line of tendency is carried further and deepened. In Romans[1] Paul says that his Gospel, the nature of which we have already considered, is the power of God unto salvation. In 2 Cor.[2] he speaks of repentance as on the way to salvation. In 1 Thess.[3] he speaks of salvation as obtained through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is feeling his way, and advancing step by step. In what we may fairly call the post-Pauline literature, we have bolder statements. In John[4] Jesus is spoken of in Samaria as the Saviour of the world; and Jesus himself is represented as saying that he came to save the world, of which he is the light. The writer of Hebrews[5] speaks of Christ as being to all who obey him the author of eternal salvation. And in Acts[6] Peter is quoted as declaring that there is no

[1] i. 16. [2] vii. 10. [3] v. 9.
[4] iv. 22. [5] v. 9. [6] iv. 12.

other name under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved.

The doctrine of salvation by Christ is not carried out to all its developments by Paul, nor can we be sure that he was the first to speak of it in the Church. Nevertheless we are justified in speaking of it as essentially a Pauline doctrine. And what Paul means by it is quite clear. He means that salvation—in this world from sin and the power of evil, in the world to come from eternal death—can be attained only by becoming a member of the body of Christ, joined to the Head by love and dependence, doing the will of God as revealed in Christ, and partaking of his righteousness. He who dies with Christ, and with him rises into a new life, is free from the power of sin and death: his life is hid with Christ in heaven, and no power of man or devil can do him harm.

This is essentially a mystic doctrine, of the same class as the doctrines taught to the pagan Mystæ, but of infinitely higher value. For the doctrine of salvation is now moralised. We have no reason to think that those who claimed salvation through Isis or Mithras were much better than their neighbours. They felt secure of the help of their patron-deity in the affairs of life and in the future world; but they did not therefore live at a higher level. But in the view of Paul those who became part of the body of Christ put off all sin and evil-doing. The spirit of Christ dwelt in them, leading them to all things pure and lovely and of good report. They were not merely filled with a spiritual enthusiasm, but that enthusiasm took the

form of a self-denying life, a life of holiness and Christian love, an "enthusiasm of humanity."

A marked characteristic of the mystery, its close relation to the world beyond the grave, belongs also to the Gospel preached by Paul. In a measure to him, as to all the early disciples, millennial expectations of a reign of righteousness on earth stood before and eclipsed the idea of a realm of blessed spirits. No doubt he began by incorporating into Christianity those eschatological notions which belonged to the best of his countrymen, and especially to the Pharisees. But tendencies worked in his spirit of which he was but partially aware. And, in fact, no teacher of the early Church played a more important part in that change of the horizon of the future life which so greatly altered the character of Christianity, and which so deeply divides the outlook of the Synoptists from that of the Fourth Gospel. The Synoptists, whether they accurately reproduce their Master or not, dwell at length and with emphasis on a speedy coming of the Son of Man to judge the nations, and to found a reign of the saints upon earth. The Fourth Evangelist speaks of the many abodes in the house of the Father, and of going to be with Christ where he dwells in the heavens. It is precisely the preaching of Paul which forms, as it were, the watershed between the two views. And it is certain that the transition between the two was made easier—we may venture to say was made, humanly speaking, possible—because the minds of men had been undergoing a long and a gradual training in the doctrine of a future life through the gradual spread

and growing power of the mystic religions. Here, as is universally allowed, Israel was not the leader but the follower, not the influencer but the influenced. It was the present world which had mainly occupied the attention of the prophets of Israel. They had risen above the notion that worldly prosperity was the infallible mark of divine favour. They had been able to grasp the notion that an inward salvation was more blessed than one which was merely external. But when their thoughts turned to the future, they imagined a golden age upon earth as the best that could be hoped for. The mystic religions, on the other hand, had made the passage from earth to heaven, and had dwelt on the idea of individual bliss in a realm of spirits. Here Christianity in the first century of its existence distinctly made its choice, and made it in the direction pointed out by the heathen rather than in that pointed out by Israel. How far the beginnings of this movement had roots in the teaching of the Founder of Christianity is a profoundly difficult question, which cannot be here discussed. But there can be no reasonable doubt that, though Paul, for all or almost all his life, was awaiting a reign of saints on the earth, yet it was really the influence of his teaching which finally turned the eyes of Christians from the hope of a millennial reign of the saints towards a spiritual heaven above the sky.

IV

Thus the Christianity of Paul is impressed, and deeply impressed, by many of the marks which are regarded by modern critics as the most noteworthy

characteristics of the mystic cults of the Hellenic world. But this does not exhaust the subject. Other points of similarity may be traced in the Epistles.

For example, when Paul says (2 Cor. xii. 4) that he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard words which it was not lawful for him to repeat,[1] we have a statement which at once takes us into the atmosphere of the Mysteries. At every mystic celebration phrases were brought before the Mystæ which it was sacrilege for them to divulge to those without. The words might be full of occult meaning or not, but in any case they were phrases of the mystery, and as such sacred.

Another feature of the pagan Mysteries is to be noted. The Mystæ not only partook of the life of their deities, but they even shared by sympathy with their deeds in the past. In the Mysteries of Eleusis the Mystæ appear to have endeavoured to live over again the pains of Demeter. They imitated her sad wanderings after her daughter had been forcibly carried away by the god of the unseen world. They shared her delight when that daughter was yielded up by her ravisher, and came back to dwell, at least for a part of each year, with her mother. In the cult of Osiris the votaries heard the tale of the slaying of the deity by the monster Typhon, of the sad search for his body by Isis, and his rebirth into a new life. In the Mithraic Mysteries the votary partook in spirit and imagination

[1] The Greek is ἄρρητα ῥήματα. The English version, "unspeakable words," is misleading; in fact it is absurd, for *words* must needs be articulate and speakable. The phrase "third heaven" is, however, Jewish and not Greek.

of the labours of Mithras the Sun-god for the help of men. In origin all these histories are no doubt merely symbolical descriptions of the course of events in the world: the annual growth of vegetation, the departure and return of the sun, and all the benefits which flow from his beneficent activities. But about the Christian era the tendency best exemplified in the writings of Euhemerus, the custom of regarding the gods as in fact men of old who had lived as the great benefactors of the human race, and so at death attained to a high rank in the world of spirits, was widely spread. Thus the words of Paul, when he speaks of dying with Christ, and rising from the dead to a new life, when he speaks of filling up the measure of the sufferings of Christ, and of being glorified with him, would not seem a strange language to the Gentile converts, many of whom must have been familiar with the Mysteries.

In many pagan festivals one of the most sacred and secret parts took the form of a ceremonial marriage between the deity of the festival and a priestess who represented the votaries. At Patara in Lycia, for example, a young priestess was annually left at night in the temple of Apollo. The wife of the king (archon) at Athens, at the festival of the Anthesteria, performed, with fourteen other women, certain hidden rites in honour of the god Dionysus, and was connected with him in sacred marriage. Such rites being familiar to the people of Asia, we can scarcely suppose them to have been absent from the mind of Paul when he speaks, in the Epistle to the Ephesians,[1] of the marriage

[1] v. 32.

of Christ and the Church as a mystery or mystic doctrine. It is of course quite possible that he had more directly in mind the relation between Israel as a nation and her divine Lord, which is worked out with such force in the book of Hosea and by others of the Hebrew prophets. But whatever may have been in the mind of Paul, to his Gentile converts the heathen range of ceremonies and ideas would be more familiar.

To bring these somewhat repulsive heathen rites into comparison with the beautiful imagery of Paul is at first sight objectionable. But we must remember that though the pagan mystic marriages no doubt had their origin at a time when notions in regard to the gods were at a low level, as if they could be appeased by nessual gratification, they afterwards took a higher meaning. It was really the community, in the opinion of all but the ignorant, which was, in the person of the priestess as its representative, united to the deity. This interpretation brings the pagan rite much nearer to its Christian parallel. At the same time it must be allowed that Paul infinitely raises the level of the idea when he adopts it into the Christian society.

One of the most remarkable features of the Pauline Gospel is the way in which in Christ all differences of rank, of colour, even of sex, disappear. Master and slave, Greek, Jew, and Ethiopian, man and woman, lose their distinctive characteristics, and stand side by side as naked souls needing salvation. We do not find this levelling in the Synoptic Gospels,[1] though we may

[1] If the phrase "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" be authentic, it will strongly emphasise this fact.

discern the seed out of which it arises. Commentators have usually been disposed to find a preparation for this development, or at least a parallel to it, in the universalist Stoic philosophy. It is safer to find it in the mystic worships of the time, into which, as we know, women and slaves were freely admitted, and where they stood on a level with the rest. It is precisely this feature of the new religions which seemed so hateful to the Roman conservatism of Juvenal. It meant, indeed, as he saw, the dissolution of ancient society; and, carried to its logical conclusion, it would mean the dissolution of all society. But at the time it stood for an upward movement of humanity. The barbarians of the North, the destined conquerors of the Roman Empire, were at hand. If they were to adhere strictly to their exclusive tribal notions, and to regard the inhabitants of Southern Europe as a mere prey, men of another race towards whom they had no obligations, the civilisation of the Græco-Roman world might have perished utterly. One is tempted to apply in this case the very pregnant phrase of Paul, that the folly of God is wiser than man.

But we must not overlook one point in which pagan Mysticism and Christianity were poles apart. Although the societies attached to the various deities of the Mysteries—Isis, Sabazius, Mithras, and the rest —were separated in organisation one from the other, and although each naturally regarded its own patron as the saving deity *par excellence*, yet there was no strong line of demarcation between them, and they were not particularly jealous one of the other. When

in Apuleius Isis addresses her votary, she says, "I am Nature, mother of all things, mistress of all elements, the firstborn of the ages, greatest of the gods, queen of the shades. . . . My sole deity, under many forms, with various rites, under different names, is adored by the whole world. The Phrygians eldest of races, call me the mother goddess of Pessinus, the Athenians born from the soil, Cecropian Minerva, the unstable Cyprians, Venus of Paphos, the Cretan archer race, Diana Dictynna; the Sicilians who speak three languages, Stygian Persephone, the Eleusinians, the ancient deity Demeter. Some call me Juno, some Bellona, some Hecate, some Rhamnusia (Nemesis). Those who are earliest illuminated with the rays of the rising sun, the Ethiopians, and Arians, and the Egyptians, masters of ancient lore, venerating me with my own ceremonies, call me by my true name, Queen Isis."

To this hospitality in religion, and syncretism in worship, certainly the Christianity of Paul presents an extreme contrast. Some of his converts seem to have tried to combine the heathen Mysteries with the Christian; but he tells them that they are combining the worship of demons with that of God. Christianity stands proudly aloof from the throng of the thiasi; and the only likeness to them which she will acknowledge is the likeness which an angel of light might bear to spirits of darkness.

How far the influence of the pagan Mysteries acted directly upon Christianity, and how far they affected it through the medium of the Jewish Diaspora, it is

very hard to say. There can be no question that the Jewish Synagogues in great cities such as Antioch and Tarsus were constantly exposed to the contagion arising from the Hellenistic societies among which they dwelt. How close, in spite of racial hostility, was the connection between the Jewish and Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor, no book makes so clear as the book of Acts. Christianity, we must always remember, after the death of the Founder, had mainly to do, not with the community in Palestine, but with the Synagogues to be found in all the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean; and until we have realised how far their ideas differed from those which belong to the earlier books of the Old Testament, we can never understand the rise of the Christian faith. That we know so little about them is a fact to be deplored; we have to move in a dim twilight, and often merely to go by probabilities and analogy. But the recent work on the books of the Jewish Apocrypha has made clear much that was before obscure, and showed us in a score of ways how the world was growing towards Christianity, and preparing the guest-chamber for its reception.

These facts are important, as they show us how the atmosphere of the time was affected by the customs and beliefs of the Mysteries. This was especially the case in the great cities, such as Corinth, Ephesus, and Antioch, which were the chief seats of Paul's activity. Ephesus, indeed, was a noted centre of the lore of the Mysteries, a fact of which we have many extant proofs.

But would not the mind of Paul, it may be objected, be set against such heathen influences? Would he not regard such observances as instituted by demons, and hateful to God? Such, no doubt, would be the conscious attitude of his mind. But in the nature of Paul there was ample room for various strata of feeling and belief to co-exist without collision. And, above all, there was the noble toleration of a large and generous nature. In fact, we know what a liberal view Paul took of many things where the general conscience of the Church was more narrow. The Christians were strongly opposed to the athletic festivals of Greece, partly perhaps because they were celebrated in honour of pagan deities, but more generally because they represented a phase of ancient civilisation with which Christians had no sympathy. The beauty of *mens sana in corpore sano* did not appeal to them. St Paul more than once mentions the athletic games of Greece in writing to the Corinthians, to whom they were familiar. But he speaks of them without reprobation. What strikes him in regard to them is the fact that they encourage temperance and a strict mastery of the body. "Every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."[1] We see the same superb consciousness of the comparative indifference of worldly things which is conspicuous in the answer of Jesus in regard to the tribute money.

Probably Paul looked on the heathen Mysteries in a similar way. No doubt they were the work of

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 25.

devils, and no Christian could touch them. But the needs of human nature to which they ministered might yet be real needs. And to all spiritual needs the faith of Christ brought satisfaction. So while, no doubt, he would not consciously copy the pagan ritual, yet there was no such repugnance to it as would prevent it from having any influence on him. "We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one." The man who amid such surroundings could use such words with absolute conviction, would not have the least fear of being led astray by any pagan ritual or belief.

The mysticising of the Christian enthusiasm, of course, only began with Paul. In the next age it was carried much further; but the new elements thus brought in were by no means so valuable or so innocent as were those introduced by Paul. The mystic cults had course mainly among the less cultivated classes of the people, and so had become deeply tinged with superstition, materialism, even sorcery. The very evils which in the sixteenth century brought the Church to the brink of ruin had, in part at least, this origin. The setting apart of a priestly caste, through whom alone the Deity would communicate with men, the materialisation of the sacraments, the sale of indulgences, the vivid imaginations of a future place of torment, the use of the Bible in incantations, and many other corruptions, had this for their fountain-head. But the time of these corruptions was not yet.

Less to be regretted was the coming in, not of the ceremonies and superstitions, but of the higher thought

belonging to the Mysteries, of what in the beginning of this chapter I called mysticism as contrasted with mystery.

At first sight it might seem that there is no real relation between the views of the great mystic theologians of Christendom and the religion of the pagan Mysteries. But on consideration we find that there is a connection, logical as well as historical. There is a basis of symbolism in both cases: in both cases it is by ceremony or image, rather than by utterance, that belief is expressed. And the transition is easy from what ought not to be uttered, as in the case of the secrets of the Mystæ, to what cannot be fully expressed in language. Thus we may fairly say that the roots even of Christian mysticism stretch back into pagan times.

By the more speculative and thoughtful writers, even of the early Christian age, the idea of Christian mysteries might be accepted in a refined and intellectual sense. In the days of the great Alexandrian Fathers, and even among the Gnostics, the word "mystery" had also a more intellectual meaning. Even the initiated, in the opinion of these speculative thinkers, could only understand in part the mysteries of the faith, which were half revealed and half hidden by means of symbol and image, obscure phrase, and ritual action. But in the earliest Christian age the word "mystery" had not primarily or usually this meaning. It did not imply a gnôsis hidden from ordinary understanding, but a teaching reserved for particular persons, and not lightly to be spoken of to those outside.

V

The resemblances between the Pauline Gospel and the teaching of the pagan Mysteries are a mere matter of history. What they prove or indicate is quite another matter. It is possible to regard them as a corruption of the primitive faith, a deviation from the pure gospel of Galilee. Or it is possible to regard them as a divinely ordained evolution, an evolution the seeds of which were sown long before the appearance of the Saviour on earth, but only sprang up into a great tree as an effect of his life and death. It is possible to regard the pagan Mysteries as the misleading invention of dæmons, or as acting the part of a pedagogue to bring men to the feet of Christ. All history is colourless and unmeaning apart from the light and colour imparted to it by will and by faith.

No doubt a comparison of the Christian with the heathen Mysteries will be distasteful to many Christians. And no wonder. We always naturally resent the comparison of what we value beyond expression with anything which can be placed beside it. The science of comparative religion seems to many to be irreligious. But really the acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, if combined with a clear view of the difference between source and value, should ease us of this feeling. In evolution it is ever a lower form of being which leads on to a higher. The savage precedes the civilised man and makes him possible; but that does not preclude but compels the careful study of the savage, and of the roots of civilisation which may be found in his ideas

and customs. And in any ethical view of the world two phases of life and culture which are temporally connected may be separated by an infinite abyss when we come to speak of value. Evolution proceeds not by inches but by bounds, more especially in the human world. The difference between father and son, or between two brothers, may be the difference between darkness and light. One man may be a moral wreck, while another, who in many ways closely resembles him, may be a light to many generations. The value of the Christian mystery is quite another matter than its historic precedents, or the movements which led up to it. That value must be tested by history and by experience. If we regard Christianity as the saving of the world, we shall not change our opinion because we find that in its origin it gathered nutriment from the soil in which it sprang up: rather, we shall gratefully recognise the divine wisdom which set in order for it all the elements necessary to its high development.

It was the great merit of the pagan Mysteries that they established and cultivated a communion between the human and the divine, that they opened ways in which man could draw nearer to God. When in Christianity God revealed himself more fully to men, the paths along which men had been stumbling in the twilight became ways shining more and more brightly towards perfect day. The savage who made a rude graven image to symbolise the human side of the divine began a course which led up to the Zeus of Pheidias and the Madonnas of Raffaele. The Babylonian or Egyptian authors of the early liturgies to Baal or Osiris

took the first steps towards the hymns of Cowper and Wesley. In the same way the outward washings of the Mystæ of Eleusis and Samothrace led towards the purity of heart without which a man cannot see God, and the devotion of the sectaries of Sabazius or Isis to their divine patron and to their fellow-believers laid a basis on which ultimately could arise the idea of the Christian Church, binding together all who had a love of the spiritual life and a desire to do the will of God in a mystic communion with its divine Lord.

Chapter V

FAITH AND THE SACRAMENTS

A discussion of the use of rites and sacraments in the Pauline Churches might seem to belong properly to a later stage of the present work. They may be held to belong rather to the side of Paul on which he stands related to the Church of the Roman Empire than to his essential preaching. It seems, however, right to speak of them in this place, as it is they especially which connect Pauline Christianity with the Mysteries of which I have written in the last chapter.

Three important rites already existed in the Christian community: baptism, the laying on of hands, and the Lord's Supper. Two of these were in great measure transformed by Paul by the application of his mystery, his essential doctrine of faith in Christ.

The laying on of hands appears to have been a Jewish rite which was adopted by the Church at Jerusalem. It abundantly appears from Acts that the Apostles were in the habit of laying their hands upon their converts, upon which rite there followed those remarkable phenomena of speaking with tongues and prophecy, which were regarded as the outward accom-

paniments of the inward working of the Divine Spirit. When the Apostles cured disease, the laying on of hands was the usual way in which they transmitted the force which overcame the power of the evil spirits, which, according to the belief of the time, were the cause of disease. According to Luke, Paul conformed to this custom, and laid hands upon his disciples.[1] But since nothing is said of the laying on of hands in Paul's own letters,[2] doubt is thrown upon this testimony, and we are led to suppose that Paul did not use, or at all events did not value, this rite. The reason may have been that it did not readily allow of a mystical interpretation. The same may be said in regard to another rite on which remarkable emphasis is laid in the Fourth Gospel, the ceremonial washing of feet by the highest authorities in the Church.

The case is otherwise with the two rites which had parallels in the Mysteries of heathendom: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I

Purification by water, whether by sprinkling or immersion, was a well-known feature of some of the Mysteries. It served to remove ceremonial impurity, and to fit the votary for admission to the privileges of the society. I have already cited a passage of Apuleius in which baptism is mentioned as the gate through which those passed who meant to devote themselves to the service of Isis. Tertullian[3] speaks of baptism

[1] Acts xix. 6. [2] I omit 1 Tim. v. 22 as not Pauline.

[3] *De Baptismo*, chap. v.

as the means of entry into certain pagan sacred societies; and says that the heathen votaries of Mithras and Isis, and those who partook of the Mysteries of Eleusis, were baptized to regeneration and delivery from the guilt of their transgressions. It was the first act in the Eleusinian Mysteries that the votaries purified themselves in the sea (ἄλαδε μύσται). A relief published by Dr Pringsheim[1] represents Telete, the personification of the festival, pouring water over the head of one of the Mystæ. But the votaries at Eleusis had to submit to another kind of purification by the blood of a sacrificed victim, the pig, which was sacred to Demeter. This washing, in blood instead of in water, was a more ordinary means of purification from crime among the Greeks. When Orestes had become polluted by the slaying of his mother, Apollo, according to one story, purified him by sacrificial blood. In fact this was a common feature of ancient ritual. As the writer of Hebrews puts it, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." A combination of the rites of purification and initiation is presented to us by the very unpleasant ceremony called the Taurobolium.[2] This seems to have belonged originally to the cult of Mithras; but it was adopted into the Phrygian worship of the great Nature goddess as early as the second century A.D. The votary was let down into a pit over the mouth of which loose boards were placed: a bull was slain on the boards, and the man beneath was drenched from head to foot in the torrent

[1] *Archäol. Beiträge z. Geschichte des eleusin. Kults.*

[2] Cumont, *Relig. orientales dans l'Empire Romain*, p. 81.

of blood. Hideous as the rite may seem to us, it may have been to many of those who submitted to it the gate of a new life. In Roman inscriptions we sometimes read that So-and-so was by a baptism of blood born again (*renatus*) to eternal life. These inscriptions are not Christian, but belong to the cults of Mithras and Cybele. This symbolical death and rebirth by the divine power figures also, with varied rites, in the cults of Osiris, Dionysus, and Attis. To the ordinary votary they were no doubt charged with magic and superstition; but there must have been to some of those who took part in them a higher and more spiritual side, in which the mere rite was transfigured.

A third way of purification, besides those by water and by blood, was by fire. By the cleansing power of fire, among many primitive societies, young men have been made fit to be members of the divine society of which the tribe was the visible expression. The Greek story of the washing of the child Demophon by the goddess Demeter in fire, to render him immortal, is well known to Greek scholars. But we need not speak further of the baptism by fire, as Paul does not allude to it. It is only interesting in connection with the prophecy of John the Baptist, as recorded in Matthew and Luke, that his successor should baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, a prophecy which has an obvious connection with Luke's account of the day of Pentecost, and the flames of fire which rested on the heads of the Apostles.

In Jewish ritual the place of ceremonies of purification was mainly taken by the rite of circumcision, by

which admittance was given to the privileges of the sacred race. Among the Jews themselves this rite was administered soon after birth, and thus became a piece of ritual rather than a sacrament. But in the case of proselytes of mature age who underwent the rite, it might well be the turning-point of the life, the beginning of a personal consecration. It would also seem that at the beginning of the Christian era proselytes were admitted, as it were, to the outer courts of Judaism, and to some of the Jewish privileges, by a mere ceremony of baptism in water, such as that administered by John the Baptist. In the synagogues of the Jewish Diaspora there were many who were attracted by the beliefs and practices of Judaism, but did not wholly throw in their lot with the chosen people; for such baptism was regarded as sufficient. Izates, King of Adiabene in the time of Claudius, was not content to be merely dipped in water, and to stop short of the rite of circumcision, although his Jewish advisers urged him in this matter to respect the prejudices of his people.[1] It was doubtless felt that some shedding of blood was necessary before one could become a real Israelite. A Gentile, as such, was in need of atonement, until blood was sprinkled for him. This might, however, be done by means of some of the sacrifices, such as the Paschal Feast, which, whatever its origin, must have been in some way a ceremony of purification.

There were thus in existence, alike in the heathen and the Jewish world, two forms of purification: one, by

[1] See Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, II. ii. 313.

sprinkling with water or immersing in water; the other, by sprinkling with blood, or at all events shedding blood. It was the former of these which was adopted as a rite by the nascent Church. The latter was not generally adopted in the Church, but only in obscure sections of it. But it became usual among some of the early Christian writers to speak of a sprinkling by the blood of Christ—that is, a figurative sprinkling—as necessary to the believer. Its literal acceptance was indeed excluded by the nature of the Christian faith.

In the very practical mind of Paul it was the actual rite of baptism with water which occupied most attention, and which became one of the corner-stones of his religious construction. There is no doubt that baptism occupied, according to his view, the same position at the threshold of the Christian Church which it held in relation to the pagan Mysteries, as the gate of life, the way of entry into a reformed and saved society. But it is also certain that, spiritual and ethical in all things, Paul would never have attributed to baptism any magic efficacy. He would no doubt have heartily agreed with the saying in 1 Peter that baptism avails not by the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but by the answer of a good conscience towards God.

The other kind of baptism, the sprinkling with blood, does not figure in the Pauline Epistles. This may seem somewhat strange, since no doubt Paul went far in the direction of regarding the death of Jesus as a baptism of blood to his Church. And in his teaching as to the Lord's Supper he goes so far in this line that we are surprised that he did not go further. We are

so used in modern days to such phrases as "sprinkling with the blood of Christ" and "the atoning sacrifice of Christ," and so much of modern theology has been built upon those ideas, that we find it hard to take Paul's phrases as to the death of Christ in a simple and unexaggerating way. But in truth it is the writers who work further on Pauline lines who develop into doctrine the notion of Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice. This sacrificial view is most fully stated in the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, in which all the ritual of the Jews is regarded as a symbolical foreshadowing of the life of Christ. According to the Fourth Evangelist Jesus was crucified on the day on which the Paschal lamb was slain, and is the victim offered for the Church. And in the Apocalypse we find the view that the saints wash their robes in the blood of the lamb put into definite words. The author of 1 Peter writes to much the same effect. Whether such language would have quite pleased Paul himself is doubtful.

Though there was solid ethical reality in the Pauline doctrine of baptism, the Apostle deeply coloured it with his mystical doctrine of Christ. Those who were baptized were buried with Christ that they might arise to a new life. They put away not only bodily impurity but sin; and the divine spirit which entered into them secured them from again falling into evil. They died to live in the new life of the spirit. In Gal. iii. 26 Paul says that all who were baptized into Christ put on Christ, or became identified with Him. Baptism was thus put into a position of enormous importance,

not only as the gate of the Church, but as the means, or at all events the accompaniment, of attaining that indwelling of the divine spirit of Christ which constituted salvation. We cannot be surprised that some of the followers of Paul made baptism the most important rite of Christianity.

We must remember that in the time of Paul only adult baptism was in use.[1] Those only were admitted to the rite who professed faith in Christ and were set upon leading a new life. Thus there always went with the sprinkling or immersion of baptism a spiritual crisis, a change of outlook. And thus there arose the possibility of a mystic interpretation of the rite in the light of experience and of conduct. As circumcision in the Jewish Church gave admission into the sacred race of Israel, so baptism was a putting off of the flesh, and an entering into the body of Christ. It was the door of the sheep-fold.

It is only by considering the influence of the Pauline view that we can understand how the Fourth Evangelist, with his notable freedom from attachment to mere outward rites, yet says that a man must be born of water, as well as of the Spirit, before he can enter into the Kingdom of God. And we are not surprised to learn that in some of the Pauline sects, notably among the Paulicians, baptism was put in a very exalted place. A check upon this extreme was placed by the coming in of the custom of infant baptism, in which we may probably see the influence of the

[1] Whether to this rule exceptions were made we cannot, of course, be sure: there is no satisfactory evidence of such exceptions.

Jewish rite of circumcision. It is, however, certain that into some of the heathen Mysteries children were initiated by baptism, so that another origin is not excluded.

It appears also that in the Taurobolium substitution of one person for another was allowed, one man receiving the benefit of the bath of another.[1] The habit of such substitution would explain the curious custom which seems to have prevailed in some of the Pauline Churches of baptizing a living person on behalf of one who was dead, perhaps in cases where a man who had intended to be baptized perished by an accident or any sudden stroke.

Customs like infant and substitutionary baptism could only have arisen when the mere rite of baptism was supposed to have some magic efficacy. This notion probably passed from the Mysteries into the Christian Church, but it is remote from the mind of Paul.

II

The changes wrought by Paul in the celebration and interpretation of the Lord's Supper constitute a very complicated subject,[2] into which I cannot enter

[1] So Inscriptions. See Anrich, *Das antike Mysterienwesen*, p. 120.

[2] A recent and elaborate discussion of this subject by M. Jean Réville, appeared in the *Revue de l'Hist. des Religions*, vol. lvi. pp. 155–179. No writer could be more learned or more methodical. As a paper which I wrote many years ago, attributing the origin of the Pauline rite of the Lord's Supper to suggestion from Eleusis, is still quoted as giving my view on the subject, I must here state that I withdrew that view in *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 455. The view which here follows is a still further modification.

at length. I can only trace a few outlines. While it is very improbable that it was Paul who first introduced the rite into the Church, yet it seems certain that he regarded his own version of it as a direct revelation from his Master in Heaven. The words, Ἐγὼ[1] γὰρ παρελαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, cannot be interpreted as meaning that Paul handed on to the Church of Corinth a rite which he had received from the Apostles at Jerusalem. No doubt the custom of breaking bread at a common meal prevailed among the Christians before his conversion. And in some manner, which it is impossible to determine with historic certainty, this custom was connected with the last supper of Jesus with his disciples before his death. That it was regarded as a sign and vehicle of the continued presence of the Founder with his Church is also probable. But Paul introduces into his description of the rite, which was celebrated at Corinth according to his special direction, certain phrases which have had great influence on the doctrine and practice of the Church.

What precisely was the foundation upon which Paul built his doctrine of the Lord's Supper is, as I have observed, scarcely possible to determine with historic certainty. Yet, if we take the documents as they stand, and try to interpret them apart from preconceived views, a not unnatural course of evolution in the history of the rite may be traced.

(a) *The Christian Common Meal.*—During the lifetime of the Founder it had been the custom of the

[1] The ἐγὼ is emphatic.

little society to eat together the simple food on which they lived. The Master broke and gave to the disciples, and they partook of the simple elements of bread and wine. Sometimes, indeed, some or all of them were guests at the table of a host, when, of course, a different order would be observed. But the common meal was usual. Thus the Master was especially associated with his way of breaking bread. After the crucifixion the custom of the common meal was continued, as the author of Acts abundantly testifies in his early chapters; but it was no longer confined to the Apostles: all Christians seem to have been included in the custom. And in fact the *συσσιτία*, the common meal in the town-hall or elsewhere, was quite familiar to the Greeks. Those who had been victorious in the great games had the right to be constantly present. In some states, such as Sparta, the public meal was an important institution, and served as a national bond of union. But the appropriateness of a common meal in the case of a society like that of the earliest Christians is so evident that it needs no explanation.

But it is obvious that in this simple common life a crisis would come when the Head was taken away. Fully believing, after the first few days of agonised doubt, that their Master was still alive, and still in spirit among them, the Apostles could not take the step, which might have seemed natural, of appointing one of their own number to preside in his place, but regarded him as still the president.

Here, again, we are in presence of a custom altogether

familiar to the Hellenistic world. In fact, the feasts of communion with departed heroes and ancestors furnish a near parallel to the early Christian communion. The ancestor was invisibly present, as was their Master among the Christians. The objects of the feast were to remind those present of their allegiance to the heroised ancestor, and by it to draw them into closer unity with one another. Few classes of monuments of antiquity are more abundant than those which represent the sepulchral banquet, and the departed ancestor partaking of it in the presence of his descendants. In the Christian catacombs the representations of the Christian supper show an obvious relation to these scenes.

(b) *The Historic Last Supper.*—This is from the strictly historic point of view a very difficult problem. It is the opinion of almost all critics that the account of that supper which is given us in Luke is considerably influenced by the passage in 1 Corinthians on the subject. Critics so conservative as Westcott and Hort regard the words of institution in Luke, "This do in remembrance of me," as an interpolation. And some influence of the Pauline Epistle is probable even in the case of the other Evangelists.

The version of the Last Supper in Mark is the most primitive; and we have the right to accept it as, generally speaking, a correct version of what took place. Mark tells us that Jesus, according to his usual habit, no doubt, broke bread and distributed it to the disciples, accompanying it with a new phrase, "This is my body." The cup of wine he also passed round to them with the

phrase "This is my blood." (In Mark's version the words "of the covenant" are added: these, as we shall see, are probably a doctrinal addition to the early tradition, and for the present we may omit them.) Of these phrases the interpretation seems to be simple and obvious. Knowing that treachery was at work among the Apostles, and that the time of his suffering was at hand, the Master expressed the fact in that simple and symbolic language which was usual to him. The bread was broken and the wine poured out, as his body was about to be broken and his blood shed by those who had the rule of the country. That he should have added that the suffering was undergone for the disciples, and have asked them to commemorate it by a solemn rite, would seem the most natural thing in the world. Only, we have no satisfactory evidence that he did so. The phrase "which is given for you," and the command to repeat the ceremony come in Luke, in the received version; but Westcott and Hort regard these as interpolations.

Was there then, some may ask, no intention in the mind of the Founder of Christianity to definitely establish a rite to be perpetuated among his followers? If we go strictly by the evidence, we must allow that there is no proof of this apart from the fact that the rite was perpetuated. On the other hand, there is strong evidence that the Founder enjoined upon his disciples the rite of washing one another's feet. For this is expressly stated in the Fourth Gospel, which embodies, whoever the writer may have been, some traditions as to the events of the last days of the

Master's life which have every appearance of being trustworthy.

Doubtless most Christians will prefer to believe that although the establishment of the Communion at the last meal cannot be proved by historic evidence, yet it is morally certain. To those who believe that the earthly life of Jesus was a revelation of divine purposes, the mere fact that the rite did arise in the early Church out of the Last Supper under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ will be sufficient to invest it with a sacred character; and historic difficulties may, from this point of view, be set aside as irrelevant. It is an essential feature of divine inspiration that it works for the future and the essential. The historic embodiments of that inspiration are always mixed with what is imperfect and of temporary value.

I have said that the phrase "of the covenant" is probably an addition. The reason for so thinking is that it seems, when it first occurs in 1 Cor. xi. 25, to be a Pauline adoption of an Old Testament phrase. In making a covenant, blood was poured out to add a sanction. This aspect of the matter is dwelt on in detail by the writer of Hebrews (ix.). If the Last Supper was, as the Synoptists assert, the Paschal Feast, it would have been quite natural that some comparison between his own death and that of the Paschal lamb should have occurred to the mind of Jesus. But it is very doubtful whether the supper was not an ordinary meal.

Matthew adds to the phrase "This is my blood" the words "of the covenant, which is shed for many unto

remission of sins." Here, again, we can scarcely doubt that we have a doctrinal addition.

The Fourth Evangelist takes up a line in regard to the Last Supper which is very striking. Not only does he give an entirely different account of what took place at it, but he uses the phrases "This is my body; this is my blood" in quite a different connection. He enlarges upon them in his usual vein of allegory. He places in the mouth of Jesus the phrases "I am the bread of life," and "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." And he treats those phrases just as he treats the theses "I am the way," "I am the door of the sheep-fold," "I am the light of the world." The symbolism of all these phrases is manifest. It is the custom of the Evangelist to pour contempt upon those who take such phrases literally. He ridicules Nicodemus for taking literally the phrase that a man must be born again. "How can a man," says Nicodemus, "be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" In the same way the woman of Samaria is represented as absurdly taking literally the phrase "He would have given thee living water": "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" And in just the same way does the Evangelist reprove those who take literally the phrases about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. The Jews exclaim, with their usual blindness, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus proceeds to explain: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." In another

place the Evangelist cites a fuller explanation. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." In the opinion of the Evangelist, then, "to eat the flesh and drink the blood" of the Master is to continue his divine obedience on earth, to live in his spirit, and to do his works. The doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ is as fundamental to him as to St Paul.

This metaphor of eating and drinking for moral and spiritual nourishment is by no means new. "Those who eat me," says Wisdom in the book of the son of Sirach, "will always again hunger for me; those who drink me will always thirst for me again."

How far the Fourth Evangelist was thinking of the actual rite of the Lord's Supper when he wrote is a very difficult question. His mind is so passionately ideal, so careless as to fact, historic or contemporary, that it is often difficult to discern between what he means to be outward event and what he means to be inward experience. Of course in his time the rite was well known in the Churches, and it is hard to imagine that he entirely excluded it from his thought. Yet it seems quite impossible that he can have attached any great spiritual value to it. Jesus in the Johannine history does not command His followers to celebrate a rite of eating and drinking, but orders them to wash one another's feet as a proof of humility and a sign of solidarity in the Church. That later writers should attach the Johannine parable of eating and drinking Christ to the Christian Eucharist was of course unavoidable; but this does not enlighten us as regards

the intention of the Evangelist. It may be that he had no definite intention; but being full of inspiration of the spirit of Christ, he wrote words which became of great importance in the history of the Church. It was a struggling into utterance of a profound need and sentiment of the Christian society inspired by the spirit of the Church, whereas the extreme materialist perversion of the Communion may be matter for regret.

In my opinion the view of the Fourth Evangelist is the true view. The simple phrases uttered at the Last Supper were purely figurative. How indeed could they be anything else? Jesus, sitting in visible and fleshly form among his disciples could not in any literal sense have identified himself with the bread which he broke and with the wine which he passed. When a man at the crisis of his fate writes an intensely pathetic letter, he may say that he writes it not with ink but with his heart's blood. Can we imagine a person so dense as to examine the writing with a microscope to see whether it is really written with blood or with ink?

(c) *The Pauline Translation.*—Paul does not speak from the strictly historic point of view, which for him was almost non-existent, but from the practical and doctrinal. To him the Lord's Supper was an existing rite of the Church. And we cannot doubt that during the thirty years or so which had elapsed since the crucifixion the rite had tended to expand and to change its character. Of such change Luke in Acts says nothing. There are, however, belonging to the sub-

Apostolic age, two important documents which help us with information on the subject. The first is the *Didachê*, or Teaching of the Apostles, a work the date of which is somewhat doubtful, but which seems to preserve the Christianity of some Churches which lay away from the main stream of Christian development towards the end of the first century B.C. The description of the Eucharist is in this document very full. To discuss it at length would take me away from my subject. But a general similarity to the point of view of the Fourth Evangelist is clear. When the cup was given, the president was to give thanks to God for the gift of Jesus, who is spoken of as the vine of David. When the bread was broken, he was to give thanks to God for life and knowledge (ζωή and γνῶσις) made known to us through Jesus. At the end of the celebration, he was to thank God for knowledge and faith and immortality made known through Jesus; and to proceed, "Thou, almighty ruler, madest all things for Thy name's sake; Thou gavest men food and drink for enjoyment that they might be grateful to Thee; but to us Thou hast granted spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son."

It is evident that this service is but a somewhat varied version of ancient Jewish forms of thanksgiving: it is a Jewish grace baptized into Christ. But in the document there is no mention of the Last Supper, nor of any historic origin, and the phrases "This is my body; this is my blood" are conspicuously absent.

Very different in character is the other document of importance, the *Apology* of Justin the Martyr, a

writing of the middle of the second century. Justin is familiar with the language of the Evangelists, and he regards the Lord's Supper as a rite of communion, a mystery to be carefully screened from unbelievers. He even compares it with the Mysteries of Mithras, and somewhat naïvely accuses the votaries of Mithras of fraudulently imitating it. The testimony of Justin shows clearly that during the century after the crucifixion there was a drift in the celebration of the rite in the direction of the heathen Mysteries.

Anthropologists in recent years have called our attention to a whole range of facts, which had not been understood until recently, having to do with the custom prevailing among peoples at a low level of culture of a ceremonial eating of the body of the divine being, usually a plant or an animal which is the totem of the tribe. There is talk of a ceremony of communion by which such people renew their relation to their deity and to one another, and the great feature of that communion is a common meal in which all alike partake of the sacred food. Properly belonging to the totemic stage of culture, such customs, or some remnants of them, may be preserved by religious conservatism into a much higher level of civilisation. Totemism and the barbarous feasts of communion were far below the surface of Hellenistic culture. But they may have been the original source of certain sacred meals which still existed in a variety of cults. In the cult of Mithras we find traces of a sacramental use of bread,[1] and to the Mystæ at Eleusis a mixed drink

[1] Anrich, *Ant. Mysterien.*, p. 107.

containing meal was given as part of the ceremony of initiation.

Dr. Frazer and other anthropologists think that the early prevalence of such barbarous rites as I have suggested may have had an influence on the history of the Christian Communion. Nor do I think it at all improbable that there may be something in the suggestion. As Christianity spread among the only slightly civilised lower classes of the Hellenistic world, it must have come in contact with all manner of barbarous survivals. During the decay of the Roman Empire it became in many ways materialised and degraded. While at the top of Christendom we find great thinkers like Clement and Augustine, we find among the masses cults and superstitions few degrees better than the pagan customs which they displaced. So we may fairly suppose that the doctrine of the mass as received by the uncivilised classes in mediæval Europe, who frankly talked of eating God, had some connection with very early beliefs as regards the sacrifice of communion. But we cannot place St Paul on that level. And, in fact, in his time we cannot trace in any of the more respectable forms of heathen religion a survival of the practice of eating the deity.

The case is very different in regard to those family and clan feasts, as to which I have already spoken. They were sufficiently familiar to all. It is probable that they might have an influence upon the development of the Christian Communion, both before the conversion of Paul, and in the Churches founded by him. In 1 Cor. x. 20 Paul compares, not of set purpose, but

incidentally, the Christian rite with the sacrifices of communion common among the pagans, wherein, by a common feast in honour of an ancestor or a deity, religious societies expressed their solidarity among themselves and their close relation to their spiritual patron. Paul warns his converts that if they eat meat or drink wine which they know to have been consecrated to pagan deities (whom he calls dæmons), they enter into a relation with those deities inconsistent with their relation to Christ: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of dæmons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of dæmons"; "I would not that ye should have communion with dæmons." This, at all events, is perfectly clear of ambiguity; the Apostle regards the Lord's Supper as a feast of communion of the same class as those practised by the pagans.

We have only to put a rite of this kind in juxtaposition with Paul's doctrine of the spiritual relation of the believer to Christ, to understand why it had before it such a momentous history in the Church. It was like connecting a pipe with a vast reservoir of water, whence flows a constant stream of refreshing and fertilising moisture.

There were, however, two elements in the Communion as understood by Paul which were wholly wanting in the heathen festivals. The first of these was the apocalyptic element, as given in the phrase "until he come." For the heathen did not expect a reappearance on earth of deceased ancestor or tribal deity. The second was the spiritual reality of the communion with

Christ as contrasted with the mere formal or ritual idea of communion with the ancestor, which cannot in the time of the rise of Christianity have had much reality or active power. In fact, the spiritual intensity of Paul really pays a compliment to the heathen heroes when he speaks of them as dæmons. The idols, he says, like a true Jew, are nothing at all: but at the same time he evidently does not wholly disbelieve in the pagan deities, but he regards them as wholly evil. To the higher side of Greek religion his Jewish training makes him blind.

It is very characteristic of the working of the Apostle's mind that though he could not find in Jewish usage any direct justification for his sacramental ideas, yet he is determined to import them into the Jewish Scriptures. Nor was it hard to do this to a mind so ready to accept figurative and symbolical interpretations of historic narratives. He finds a prototype of baptism in the passing through the Red Sea with Moses,[1] although the people are specially said in Exodus to have passed the sea dry-shod. And he finds a prototype of the meal of communion in the drinking by the people of water from the rock, when it flowed forth at the stroke of Moses' staff. But because that drinking of water in the wilderness might seem too natural and simple an event to bear the weight of a mystical interpretation, Paul is careful to explain that the rock was really not a material but a spiritual rock, and in fact "that rock was Christ." Thus the children of Israel in the desert

[1] 1 Cor. x. 2.

in a mystic fashion actually partook of the Christian communion.

This remarkable passage throws a strong light on the working of the Apostle's mind. And it removes any hesitation we might feel in supposing that he might be influenced by heathen ideas. As heathen he would no doubt rigorously exclude them. But how easy it was for him to believe that they were not heathen, but really Jewish! It is the same vein of thought which is taken up by Philo, that everything good in Greek custom and thought really comes from the divine revelation made to Israel.

A remarkable feature of the Pauline communion, which has sometimes not been sufficiently regarded, is that those who partook of it brought their own food to the place of meeting. We find no trace of consecrating the food. Here we are reminded of the customs, not of the Mysteries, where the food was provided by the hierophants, but of the contributory meals often held in Greek cities, in the public halls or prytaneia. This can, however, only be regarded as a temporary feature of the Communion, sure to die away before long, because it stood in the way of any really sacramental use of the occasion.

We may, then, venture to see in the Lord's Supper as practised by the Church of Corinth elements taken from various sources, and fused together. (1) The basis of the custom was the Christian common meal, a continuation in every group of Christians of the custom of breaking bread together which prevailed in the lifetime of the Founder, and was continued after

his death. Very early the Apostles came to believe in the continued and special spiritual presence of their Master at these meals; and they hoped to continue them until his return in glory. (2) The words which compare the body and blood of Jesus to broken bread and poured out wine bestowed on the disciples were very early attributed to the Founder, and regarded as his utterance at his last meal with the disciples. They are prominent in the early tradition of the Marcan gospel. And it is difficult to assign to them any other origin. But they are purely symbolical and figurative expressions, an obvious parable. (3) There is certainly a Pauline element, which the Apostle regarded as a revelation from above. We can scarcely regard this element as a revelation of historic fact, as to what did or did not take place at the Last Supper. Rather, it is a revelation of the meaning and character of the Christian rite, imparting to it a new and more mystic tinge. The phrase which most fully embodies it seems to be ver. 26: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." It was the death of Jesus Christ which was for Paul the corner-stone of Christianity. And salvation by faith in him was the great Christian mystery. By taking part in the sacred feast, the Christian was in a special manner able to unite himself to his Lord, to die with him to the world, and to live with him in God. And the rite was to be continued until the return of that Lord from heaven, when his merely ideal presence would be superseded by a presence in the spiritual body. As, towards the end of Paul's

life, his expectation of his Master's return died down, the Christian rite would gain, not lose, in sacredness. But it is curious that in his later letters he does not return to the subject.

It is a confirmation of this view of the Pauline doctrine of the Communion, that it is parallel to the Pauline doctrine of baptism. In each case an existing rite of Jewish origin was taken up, and interpreted in a manner parallel to that of the Mysteries.

Chapter VI

ESCHATOLOGY AND THE FUTURE LIFE

The eschatological views of Paul mark a transition from purely Jewish to Hellenistic notions. And here, as in other phases of his belief, we may observe the power of the contemporary mystic tendencies.

Among the Jews there had long been developing the notion of a Messiah who should come to establish upon earth the reign of the saints. And as the tendency of the Jewish mind was naturally materialist, this reign was of a physical nature. Only, it was to be shared by the pious Israelites who had passed away, and whose bodies were to revive to take a part in the new and glorious kingdom of the elect people. As to the participation of the Gentiles in this new state of the world, opinions varied from writer to writer, according to the narrowness of his tribal feeling or the width of his human sympathy. But in any case the position of the Gentiles must be subordinate. The whole apocalyptic tendency, which is so marked in the books of the Jewish Apocrypha, such as those which bear the names of Baruch and Enoch, rose from a bitter sense of national

oppression by the Gentiles, while at the same time every Jew felt that he was superior to all Gentiles, one of a race chosen in remote times by God to be his peculiar people. The tyranny of the worse over the better, of the mere men of blood and iron over the people of the true faith, could not endure for ever. But as resistance to the Romans was hopeless, rescue could only come from a divine Messiah, sent to overthrow the power of the nations, and to bring in a new age.

It has been much disputed what part was played in the consciousness of Jesus by his expectation of a glorious return to earth and the establishment there of a divine kingdom. It has been a tendency among recent advanced writers, German, French, and English, to bring this anticipation very much to the front, to make it the central feature in the thought of the Founder of Christianity. I am convinced that they have gone too far. There are, indeed, several important passages in the Synoptic Gospels which give countenance to this view. Perhaps the most remarkable of all is the saying of Jesus recorded in Mark xiv. 25: "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." One or two other passages of this kind are very striking, and, if we were sure that we had the very words of Jesus, might prove conclusively that he expected the immediate advent of the Kingdom upon earth. But, on the other hand, the long eschatological passage in Mark xiii. is obviously largely apocryphal. And the parables of Jesus seem to me to prove decisively that it was

mainly as present, potentially and spiritually, that Jesus regarded the divine Kingdom. It was already working in the hearts of men. Nothing could offer a stronger contrast to the ordinary mood of Jewish eschatology than do these profound and yet simple tales. At the same time, I would not deny that Jesus may at times have spoken of the Kingdom as objectively imminent as well as inward. The Pharisees in his own time, as well as the Christians of the next generation, were much anchored on such hopes.

Though the tendency among scholars of late has been to make much of the eschatological element in the preaching of Jesus, some eminent authorities have taken another line. For example, Wellhausen, Wrede, and Kölbing[1] are all agreed in regarding the eschatological element in the Synoptic teaching as secondary, and the spiritual and ethical element as primary. Prophetic reform was nearer to the thought of Jesus than Messianic triumph. That his followers should love God and seek to do his will, and love their neighbours as themselves was at the bottom of his teaching. The future he left in the hands of God in perfect trust. It is a satisfaction to me to find the views which I have long advocated maintained by such authority.

In essentials it was the same in the case of Paul, though his expectation of the world to come was more

[1] See Kölbing's *Geistige Einwirkung Jesu auf Paulus*, pp. 47–56. On the same side are two excellent papers read at the Oxford Congress of the History of Religions by Professors Peabody and von Dobschütz. The extreme treatise of Schweitzer, on the other side, seems to me to wander so far from common-sense as to be self-destructive.

vivid than his Master's. He was more of a statesman, and less of a prophet. He looked for the destruction of the present scheme of things, and the "coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven." But yet what Paul really cares about is the Christian spirit and the Christian character in the present world. To be in Christ now is far more the object of his desire than to reign with Christ in a renovated world. Yet, at least in his earlier writings, he does dwell much in thought on the *Parousia*, and indeed by his theories somewhat transforms the notion of it.

As in the words of Jesus, so in the Epistles of Paul there is no clear distinction drawn between the future and the present kingdom, between the new heaven and earth to be suddenly and catastrophically revealed, and that which already exists as a pattern in the divine thought and is intertwined with the existing world of flesh and sense. The rigorous German critics who, like Weiss and Schweitzer, are determined in their presentation of alternatives—that Jesus shall speak of the divine Kingdom *either* as future and catastrophic *or* as present and implicit—show that they do not understand the ways of thought of the race and the time. "Whatever the faults of the Rabbis were," writes Dr Schechter, "consistency was not one of them." If we would understand the writers, either of the Old or the New Testament, we must pass out of the clear, critical, logical atmosphere of our own times into a region of stronger emotions and less clearly defined thought; we must exchange the clear daylight for a light like that which abides in the cathedral of Chartres, stained by all the

colours of the windows, and impeded by all intricacies of construction.

As I have already observed, to Jesus the Kingdom was primarily present and secondarily future. The same is still more evidently the case with Paul. While he looked for the Parousia, it did not dominate his imagination, save now and then. But the present Kingdom furnished the great end and purpose of his practical life. Paul was, above all things, sane and practical; and the needs of the Church, which was in his time rapidly crystallising, kept him employed night and day.

In the Pauline Epistles the phrase "the Kingdom of God" does not often recur; Paul more often uses the phrase "the Church"; but when it is used, it is used in the present tense as well as in the future. In Romans xiv. 17 he writes, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Obviously the Apostle is here speaking of conduct and the present experience of Christians. Eating and drinking, about which some of the disciples had scruples, are declared to be in themselves indifferent; what really matters is the life in the Spirit, which life is lived in the present, on the earth. In 1 Cor. iv. 20 Paul writes, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." He is opposing those who with boastful speeches claimed to better his teaching; and he demands that the controversy between him and them shall be decided, not by words but by spiritual force, in which the life of the Church, which is the divine Kingdom, consists.

A similar view, though differently expressed, appears in a later Epistle, generally recognised as Pauline, that to the Colossians (i. 13). Here the writer is speaking of the causes which the converts have for joy and thankfulness. The chief of these is that God has delivered them out of the power of darkness, and has translated them into the Kingdom of the Son of his love. Obviously, since the delivery has already taken place, the Kingdom into which they are admitted cannot be in the future only.

In some instances it is almost impossible to say whether, in speaking of the Kingdom, Paul means the future realm or the existing society. For example, in 1 Thess. ii. 12 he bids his disciples behave in a manner worthy of their vocation, since God calls (or called) them to his own Kingdom and glory. Here it is not easy to say whether the Apostle is thinking of the calling as leading to membership of an existing society or heirship of a future kingdom. The present and the future are but two sides of a status of salvation to which Christians have attained. Alas for St Paul! How little he understands the conditions and the necessities of modern criticism!

In fact, in this mingling of the present and the future tenses, this view of the future as already existing and underlying the present, both Paul and his Master only carry on the custom of the prophets of Israel. They also are in the habit of mixing their tenses. When they foresee the fall of Babylon they speak of it as now occurring. When they anticipate the revival of Jerusalem, it is for them already arisen from the dust.

When they reprobate the sins of the people, they speak as if those sins had already met their punishment. Nor is such vision of the future in the present confined to the prophets; it marks the writings of great mystics in all ages. To the man who sees through the existing frame of circumstance to the underlying realities, time is apt to stand still, or to appear as a mere unessential condition of human observation.

So the eschatology of Paul, however it may at times have overshadowed his mind, has in effect no great influence upon his ethic, has no power to make it unreal, or to cut it away from the basis of human nature. A life of practical exertion kept his mind fresh and sane, and as far as possible from falling into the fanaticism which the eschatological beliefs of the time were liable to bring about.

In two places, when he is deliberately forecasting the future (1 Thess. iv. 13–18; 1 Cor. xv.), he dreams of a catastrophic return of the Master to reign upon earth; he sees the drama of a final judgment, and the triumph of Christ over his enemies. But he modifies the Jewish vision by introducing the Hellenistic idea of a spiritual body, to take the place of flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the divine Kingdom. Suddenly, he says, at the sound of the last trumpet, the dead in Christ shall rise in spiritual form, and the Christians who live shall in a moment find their bodies changed from flesh to spirit, that they may be like their Master, and fit inhabitants of the new and spiritual Jerusalem which is to appear on earth.

This notion of a spiritual body is, of course, no

invention of Paul. It is, in fact, a view which, first arising in that rude state of culture called by Dr Tylor animism, has prevailed ever since, at least in some strata of society. Among primitive races each man is regarded as having, besides his visible corporeal frame, an inner or ghostlike body, which in sleep or in trance leaves the grosser tenement and flits into other regions of the world or the realms of spirits which lie beyond the world. This ghost-soul it is which quits the body at death. As to what becomes of it, there have been all sorts of conflicting beliefs. The most primitive view makes it hover about the tomb, there to consume the immaterial parts of the food and drink offered to the dead. A more highly developed theory of the future life, such as those which prevailed in historic Egypt and Greece, supposed it to make a long journey into the land of shades, there to receive a happy or a dismal fate according to its deserts.

In the Pauline doctrine of the spiritual body, however, there are certain very marked features, though his hurried and fervid language scarcely allows us to see his meaning with clearness; nor can we be sure how far he deliberately adopted a view at all. In the first place, the spiritual body does not seem to come into being until the coming of the Lord, when a great change takes place in the twinkling of an eye, and the material puts on immateriality. Of the possibility of bodies lying in the ground until they became mere dust or were absorbed into fresh forms of life, he does not seem to have thought; and naturally, since he expected a speedy Parousia. And in the second place, the spiritual body

seems to belong only to the Christian. Paul is thinking so exclusively of the future of members of the society that he does not dwell at length on the fate of the unbelieving.

As to the kind of world into which Christians with their Master shall enter, Paul nowhere expresses a definite view, and it may be doubted whether he ever formed one. The living were to be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Surely the present material world could not be regarded as a place suited for habitation by spiritual bodies. Possibly Paul was looking forward to such a catastrophe as that described in 2 Peter,[1] when the heavens should break up with a loud noise and the earth perish in a great conflagration, to be purified by fire, and made a fit abode for the changed bodies of the saints.

This view of the future life is transitional between what is Jewish and what is really Christian. It is probable that the reasons for adopting the view were to be found in Paul's experience. The disciple was to be as his Lord; and Paul had seen his Master in spiritual form, not in a material body as the disciples in Jerusalem had seen him—with the wounds of the cross still unhealed, and desiring nourishment of food and drink,—but radiant, immaterial, triumphant. Such must also they be who were disciples of Christ and shared his life.

The theory of the spiritual body is not, however, a very important part of the eschatology of Paul. What is more important, because more in the line of the future movement of the Church, is his idea that

[1] iii. 10. The same idea in the Apocalypse, xxi. 1.

the coming Kingdom belongs only to those who have faith in Christ. Here Paul's view closely resembles those current in the mystic sects, the members of which looked to the deity with whom they had communion as their destined saviour in the life after death. Among such sectaries there probably was no deliberate intention of monopolising the good things of the future life. Among polytheists it was easy to suppose that various deities might each have, so to speak, a clientèle of those whom they would bring to happiness. In the realm of the dead, Isis might preside in one mansion, Persephone in another, Mithras in a third, and so on. But in a religion which was destined to be a world-religion, the doctrine took a different aspect. The hope of future bliss belonged, according to Paul, to every member of the new society, though in one place[1] he hints that those who are thoroughly unrighteous shall not have part in the Kingdom. But exclusion of Christians from it will be rare, since even notorious offenders, like that member of the Church of Corinth who had deserved to be expelled from the society, were by Paul's direction only to be delivered over to Satan for a time for the punishment of the flesh, that their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord (1 Cor. v. 5). But, on the other hand, there could be no salvation in Christ for those who did not believe in him, nor for the heathen. This may seem harsh; and commentators have tried to soften its severity. But what other view was possible to Paul? The doctrine of the immortality

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9.

of the soul was Greek, not Jewish, and did not belong to his range of thought. With the death of the body men died altogether, unless they had in them some immortal principle. Such was the Spirit of Christ. Those who were partakers of it might sleep for a time, but they would not perish, but come forth at the second coming of their Lord, to reign with him. Unbelievers and the wicked would not revive, and, if alive at the second coming, would perish. Sudden destruction would come upon them, and they would not escape.

Under the reign of Christ there would be great diversities of fate. Some Christians would attain great honour, and be set to judge men and angels. Some would be saved, yet so as by fire, and their works would be burned up. A humdrum state wherein all are alike perfectly happy does not seem to correspond to Paul's anticipations.

It seems that as time went on, and the coming of the Master was delayed, the mind of Paul underwent a transition which must have been not unusual among the early Christians. In Phil. i. 23 we have a glimpse of his later belief: "Having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better." The Apostle here is not speaking of the Parousia, but of his own individual death, which he regards as a translation into another realm of being and into the presence of Christ. This thought is not to be reconciled with the eschatology of Thessalonians and Corinthians. We may, however, compare a passage in John:[1] "In my Father's house are many mansions;

[1] xiv. 2.

if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The views of the two writers are not quite the same, for the Fourth Evangelist seems still to speak of a Parousia, while Paul seems to have drifted away (at least for the moment) from that idea. But in both we have an adumbration of the later, the higher Christian teaching. It is in the hope of being taken to dwell with Christ that thousands of martyrs have met death with a light heart. At the same time the care with which the bodies of martyrs were preserved, and the persistent veneration of them, shows how the cruder beliefs still lingered in the Church.

In the mind of Paul the transition from the earlier to the later view was not harsh. In both cases it was the being with Christ which was the one thing he desired. But yet it is evident that his later view opened the door into a new and vast region of thought and hope. It marks the passage from a Jewish apocalyptic hope to that belief in a remote spiritual world contemporary with the life on earth, and full of vast possibilities of happiness and misery, which was the possession of many of the peoples of antiquity, and which, through the influence of the Mysteries, had spread widely among the dwellers by the Eastern Mediterranean. With it we enter into a great realm of belief and speculation which profoundly interested the Christian mind all through the Middle Ages, and finds its apotheosis in the immortal poem of Dante.

Chapter VII

THE PAULINE ETHICS

I

The view generally held in regard to St Paul, that he threw into the form of doctrine the sublime spiritual teaching of his Master, requires much modification. Of course it has some justification. In the teaching of Jesus there is no doctrine. In the writings of St Paul, whose mind had been developed by Jewish and Hellenistic training in a much more systematic and articulate direction, doctrine does appear. But it is by no means the purpose of Paul, even in the Roman Epistle, to set forth a creed or a scheme of belief. In that Epistle he is mainly bent, as in the Corinthian Epistles he is almost entirely bent, upon what is ethical, what has relation to conduct, and to human love and hope. He drifts into a doctrinal discussion, I had almost said a doctrinal slough, because it lies directly in his path. But he is not happy there, nor do I think that he there shows at his best. And it is with obvious relief that he goes back to his ethical exhortation.

If anyone doubts this, he should read the Roman

Epistle consecutively, and note its transitions. The Apostle begins by speaking of the divine righteousness which comes by faith (i. 17), and dwells with bitter horror upon the vices which he knows to prevail in the great cities. Then he shows the helplessness alike of Jewish law and Gentile ethics in face of this corruption, and is led by degrees into the historic and doctrinal discussions of which I shall speak later.[1] But at his twelfth chapter he returns, as if with a sigh of relief, to the ethical question, and to a description of the kind of life which should prevail in the Church. And as he does so his tone changes; the man is no longer dominated by the rabbi; the missionary breaks free from the meshes of criticism; the preacher pours out his heart among his converts.

The ethical teaching of Paul is full of genius and of originality. I do not of course mean that he sets up as virtues traits which had been condemned as vicious, or that he treats the virtues of the good people about him as worthless. But he exhibits a new spirit, and accepts a new standpoint, whence the whole land of conduct seems to those versed in ancient morality to show new aspects. The life of virtue is not to him, as to Aristotle, a pursuit of the mean between extremes, but an enthusiasm, a passion.

It is not, however, right to pass directly from the ethics of Aristotle to those of St Paul. For in the interval between the two an immense change had come over the ethics, if not of mankind, at all events of the upper strata of society. This was in part due to the

[1] Below, chap. ix.

ethical conservatism of Rome, to the relics of the sturdy old republican righteousness which had marked the early history of the ruling city, and had survived all the catastrophes which followed, to the Roman piety which Augustus and his successors tried to re-establish.[1] But in a higher degree it was due to the spread of the Stoic morality. Stoicism, as is well known, was really a great humanitarian movement covered by only a thin veneer of Greek philosophy. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was a Phœnician of Cyprus. Chrysippus, Aratus, and several other prominent Stoics were, like Paul himself, Cilicians. With the acceptance of Stoicism by its leaders and public men, the ancient world gave up the merely tribal morality of the Greek cities; it gave up the search for happiness as the end of life, and adopted instead views as to the dignity of human nature, the brotherhood of all men, the duty of conforming to the order visible in the material universe, which were destined, when mingled with Christianity, immensely to influence the world's history.

As religion had been partly orientalised, and in a great degree spiritualised, by the coming in of the religions of the Mysteries, so morality had been partly orientalised and infinitely widened by the spread of the Stoic ethics. Tarsus, when Paul was born, was one of the chief seats of the Stoic philosophy, and the Apostle was almost as much born into the ethics of this sect as he was into rabbinical ways of argument. This was

[1] On this point I am glad to be now able to refer the reader to Mr Warde Fowler's *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (Lecture XIX.), a work which is a model of scientific method and of insight.

his starting-point, and, alike in the phrases he uses and his ways of regarding vice, he is under strong Stoic influence.

It is well known that the resemblances between the Pauline ethics and those of Seneca are so notable that a forged series of letters between the great contemporaries was invented. Some of the Christian Fathers speak of Seneca and Epictetus as *nostri*, "of our persuasion." The Stoic ethics had that *inwardness* which is the most indelible mark of the teaching alike of Paul and of his Master. Parallel passages exhibiting the likeness between the Stoic teaching, that of the Sermon on the Mount, and that of the Pauline Epistles, are set forth in a well-known dissertation by Bishop Lightfoot,[1] and I need not here repeat them.

Nevertheless, taking a broad view of the ethics of Paul, one sees that he differs widely from the morality current in his time. His opposition to the Pharisaic view that a man can attain to righteousness by self-discipline and a strict observance of the Jewish law is constant and passionate. His opposition to the Stoic morality is no less keen. The root principles of the Stoic ethics are a sense of the dignity of human nature and a determination to live according to the visible order of the universe. Paul, on the other hand, regarded human nature as corrupt and perverted; and the visible order of the world did not impress his imagination.

The difference between the ethics of Paul and those of the Stoics is really profound. This may be illustrated by placing side by side passages of Seneca and Paul in

[1] *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 247–316.

regard to worldly misfortune.[1] "What then?" says Seneca; "is it death, bonds, fire, all the shafts of fortune that the sage will fear? Not he. He knows that all these are not real, but only apparent evils. He regards them all as mere terrors to human life." Infinitely different is the feeling of Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The philosopher rises above calamity by firmness of resolve: the Christian soars above it on the wings of love. In a word, the ethics of Paul were Christian, that is, in accord with the new light which had dawned on the world in the life of Jesus, and went on after his departure in the Christian community.

It is noteworthy that Paul but seldom quotes sayings preserved to us by the Synoptists. The nearest parallel to the Synoptic narrative is to be found in the account of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. xi. 23. But there Paul declares that he has received the rite from the Lord Himself. It is with the critics a question whether the Synoptists do not here follow Paul. Luke, in particular, almost certainly does so. The writer of Acts puts into the mouth of Paul one quotation from the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This occurs in Paul's speech at Miletus,[2] by far the most authentic of his speeches, reported almost certainly

[1] This juxtaposition I owe to Clemen, *Religionsgesch. Erklärung des neuen Testaments*, p. 53.

[2] Acts xx. 35.

by an auditor. And the phrase is quite in the manner of Jesus. But it does not occur in our Gospels. Elsewhere occasionally the Apostle seems to go back consciously to the words of his Master. This is the case when he sets forth the rule that they who preach the Gospel shall live by the Gospel,[1] which reminds us of the saying, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Paul here expressly says that he is repeating an ordinance of the Lord. Again, when he speaks of marriage, he writes, "Unto the married I give charge, not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband."[2] Here, again, he seems to refer to the Master's teaching as current in the tradition of the society.

More often there is a marked parallelism between the teaching of Paul and the Synoptic discourses, yet Paul does not seem to be consciously borrowing. For example, in Rom. xiii. 6 we have a view of duty to Roman officials which reminds us of the saying of Jesus in regard to the tribute-money. "Rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. . . . For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service." So again in Rom. xvi. 19 Paul's advice to the disciples to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil," recalls the charge of Jesus to his missionaries that they should "be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves."

When, however, we turn from mere coincidences in expression or conscious borrowing by Paul from currently reported sayings of his Master, to the spirit

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 14. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 10.

behind the letter, the likeness between the teaching of the Jesus of the Synoptists and that of Paul is remarkable. Both exhibit the working of the same tendencies amid surroundings somewhat different. This is a fact of the utmost importance. It has been recognised by almost all recent writers on the subject, even some of the most advanced critics. Wernle, for example, writes, "Paul never knew Jesus in his lifetime; but nevertheless it was he who best understood him." In a recent paper,[1] Mr Charles A. A. Scott has set forth this fundamental likeness of teaching in a very striking way and in considerable detail. I may cite a few notable instances in which an underlying resemblance may be seen. Jesus says, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect": Paul echoes, "Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children." How unlike in manner, but how similar in idea! Jesus speaks of those who cleave to the world and do not dare to follow him as dead: "Let the dead bury their dead." Paul uses similar language: "You did he quicken, when ye were dead." This conception of the spiritual life as the only true life is fundamental to the teaching of both. Jesus said, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking." Paul taught men to use without abusing all the good gifts of God: the question of eating and drinking, he says, has nothing to do with the divine kingdom, though, of course, he is fierce in his condemnation of gluttony and drunkenness. In a religious teacher this deliberate rejection of asceticism is a very fine feature; it implies

[1] *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, ed. Swete, pp. 331–377.

great enthusiasm without fanaticism. And it is common to the Master and his disciple. Among the most characteristic sayings of Jesus is that with regard to receiving the Kingdom of God in the spirit of little children. It would be difficult to parallel the saying out of pre-Christian literature. But when Paul writes, "If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature," we have a similar idea in quite a new expression. In all these cases it is hard to suppose that there is any conscious imitation or borrowing: yet how close is the parallelism!

After a detailed statement of the similarities between Paul and his Master, Mr Scott thus sums up: "A closer examination of the relation between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul confirms the primary impression that Paul reproduces in a very remarkable way the mind of Christ. When all possible allowance has been made for the difference of tradition and reminiscence, and at the other extreme, for the effect of his having the completed history of Jesus to interpret, there remains a whole series of phenomena, of which no account has been given. Paul shows just that harmony with Jesus, with his aim and method, which in another we should put down to intimacy. In fact, were it not that we have such excellent reason for believing that he was not one of the disciples of Jesus, we should inevitably have taken him to be one of these, and the one among them who had entered most deeply into his Master's spirit."[1]

We shall see how essentially Christian Paul's morality

[1] *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 375.

is if we compare his ethical preaching with that which lies behind the text of the Synoptists. Of course there are deep differences between the two, arising partly from changed surroundings, partly from the natural course of development. Yet their common basis and the identity of their main lines can scarcely be denied. Both are rooted and grounded in the love of God and man; both are full of trust in the saving power of the Divine Spirit. Both are filled with a passion for the spiritual life as the real life, while the life on earth is but temporary and vanishing. What is in the Synoptists the spirit of the life of Jesus is to Paul the spirit of the life in Christ. It is a spirit of sonship, of nearness to God, of confident superiority to evil spirits, and of an indwelling life which is in its very nature eternal.

Perhaps the most striking of the coincidences between the teaching in the Gospels and that in the Epistles lies in the great prominence of the doctrine of the divine will. As regards the Gospels, especially that of Matthew, it is unnecessary to labour this point, as the Lord's Prayer and the scene in Gethsemane will occur to every reader. One or two parallel passages of Paul may be cited, such as: "that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God";[1] "This is the will of God, even your sanctification";[2] "Prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."[3] This coincidence is the more noteworthy, because the phrase "the will of God" is not prominent in the Old Testament, though it occurs in two of the Psalms. It

[1] Col. iv. 12. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 3. [3] Rom. xii. 2.

is not, however, by citation of particular passages that one can best prove the likeness of the Pauline ethic to that of Jesus: the two, under a variety in conditions, are astonishingly similar in essence.

We are told that when Jesus was asked to set forth the main principles of his teaching, he declared[1] that it was summed up in the two devotions of supreme love to God, and love to one's neighbour. By Paul the love of God is spoken of as the root of religious knowledge, the spring of hope, the pledge of happiness hereafter. What Paul thought of the love of one's neighbour need hardly be stated; but we may quote the phrase in Gal. v. 14: "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," because it shows an absolutely identical reading of the law by Master and by disciple. It is true that Paul almost as frequently speaks of the love of Christ as of the love of God; and that when he speaks of love to man he means love to fellow-Christians: but this translation of the two phrases is necessary to bring them into accord with the general drift of his teaching.

There is one passage in Romans,[2] in which a certain spiritual kinship between Paul and his Master is especially clear. He writes, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the

[1] Matthew and Mark give this great saying to Jesus; in Luke it is put in the mouth of a lawyer. The former statement is in every way preferable.

[2] ii. 28, 29.

spirit, not in the letter." Here we have that *inwardness*, that looking through what is on the surface to the deep springs of human life, which is so characteristic of the sayings of Jesus. Exactly similar is the moral of the tale of the good Samaritan, who was a better Jew than the priest and the Levite. It might be maintained that this parable really belongs to the post-resurrection history of the Church, and shows Pauline tendencies. Yet we have the fact that it has always been considered full of the spirit of Jesus.

Though the attitudes taken towards the Jewish law by Master and by disciple greatly differ, yet there is, after all, between these attitudes a certain spiritual kinship. Jesus amends the law by an authority based on his divine insight. "It hath been said" gives way to his "I say unto you." A new and spiritual rendering emerges from the letter of the Mosaic precepts. Or sometimes the law, as in the case of the permission of divorce, is boldly set aside as inconsistent with that which was from the beginning, the order of God established in the very nature of things. Paul sees the inefficiency of the law as a whole, but he does not try to amend it; rather, he sets it aside as having had but a temporary value, and as superseded by the new law of love and faith. In the case of both great teachers, however, we see the ethnic morality of the Jews giving way to an ethic which is spiritual and in the highest sense human.

It is, however, in his exaltation of the especially Christian virtues, gentleness, meekness, peacefulness, that Paul comes most near to his Master; and he does so

quite consciously. "Let the peace of Christ," he writes, "rule in your hearts";[1] "I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."[2] If Jesus said, "Resist not evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," Paul wrote, "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?"[3] Everywhere in his exhortations Paul lays stress on the meek type of character as the only one suitable to Christians: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you."[4]

It is by citing the example of the life of his Master that Paul enforces these exhortations. But of course he thinks of that life not only as it was manifested on earth, but as he conceived it, first in heaven, then on earth, and then again at the right hand of God. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor."[5] For this reason liberality in giving is the duty of a Christian. In the same way the Apostle urges the duty of humility by citing the example of Christ: "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,"[6] who voluntarily humbled himself, and took the form of a workman. "Be ye followers of me," writes Paul in more than one place, "as I am a follower of Christ, and walk in his steps."[7]

[1] Col. iii. 15.
[2] 2 Cor. x. 1.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 7.
[4] Col. iii. 12.
[5] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[6] Philip. ii. 5.
[7] 1 Cor. xi. 1: 1 Thess. i. 6.

II

The principle of the ethics of Paul lies in a mystic enthusiasm. But here, as always, the enthusiasm does not betray him into extravagance; his strong sense of fact and reality tempers it. As a vessel with a heavy keel can bear strong wind without an upset, so that even a gale only enables it to bring its cargo into harbour the faster, so with Paul the Christian enthusiasm gives an impulse and a sanction to the solid morality of common-sense and experience. Take the subject of the relations of the sexes, perhaps the best test of all religious teachers. Jesus seems to have spoken little of marriage. He proclaims the lofty doctrine of the indissolubleness of the marriage tie: but his thought is mainly in the realm where they marry not, nor are given in marriage. Paul is driven by his expectation of a speedy end of the world to doubt whether it is wise to contract earthly ties. But, nevertheless, when he turns to existing facts, and lays down rules for the life which was being lived in the cities which he loved, how simply, how seriously, how beautifully he speaks of marriage! Modern women of a certain type are apt to regard Paul's exhortations to their sex as out of date. Yet it may be doubted if any Christian teacher has done more than he for the true happiness of women. With his immortal comparison of the marriage tie to the relation between Christ and the Church, he set up an ideal which has raised the level of millions of happy Christian marriages. In an age when marriage, at all events among the

wealthier classes, was becoming a mere temporary union, at a time reflected for us in the appalling, and we may hope exaggerating, pages of Tacitus and Juvenal, he brought back marriage to the type laid up in heaven. Of course his race helped him. It is the practice of domestic virtue which saved the Jews from extermination in the Middle Ages, and which has always been their best point. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." Well, indeed, would it have been for the human race, if Christians had listened to the Apostle! Paul, however, does not hesitate to put clearly and hardly the root principles of family morality. As he says, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat," so he says, "The husband is the head of the wife," and "Children, obey your parents in the Lord."

Probably Paul was fully alive to a danger which threatens every new religion. Even in the Gospel of Luke we find a certain femininity, which is full of charm, but which is a danger to that manly spirit of which St Catherine of Siena is always speaking. Among some of the earlier sects of heretics the invasion of the sphere of men by women went far. Among the followers of Marcion women undertook to teach, to dispute, to carry out exorcisms, perhaps to baptize.[1] Among the Montanists women were bishops and presbyters, and the excesses to which these sectaries tended is well known. They sheltered themselves behind the words of Paul, "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female."

[1] Cf. Harnack, *Constitution and Law*, pp. 151, 154.

But Paul himself applied his great principle with wisdom and good sense. The test of the true leader lies in his power to refuse to draw logical conclusions.

Paul appears on his strongest side, the side which he himself cared most about, as the continuer and confirmer of the type of morality of which the standard is set up for all time in the Sermon on the Mount. For the stern virtues of paganism, the virtues which stand out so attractively in the pages of Plutarch's *Lives*, he would substitute another type of goodness, gentle, kind, self-denying, not seeking its own, pure, chaste, and forgiving. And we know that, as a matter of history, it was the beauty and attractiveness of the best type of Christian life which gradually won over the world. Within the Roman Empire it gradually transformed human relations, did away with the harshness of slavery, abolished gladiatorial shows, checked the harshness of the relations between governing and governed, between race and race. And when the Roman organisation gave way before the onset of the fierce barbarians of the North, it gradually gained power over those barbarians, checked their love of rapine and bloodshed, made them feel that the vanquished populations were to be protected, not exterminated, set before them nobler views of conduct and religion. It was thus that the Northern flood, which might have reduced all to a desert, as did the campaigns of an Attila or a Timour, became the starting-point of a development whence a new civilisation was to arise.

It is the Church which is the body of Christ, and which possesses the secret of eternal life. The diffi-

culties which rise in a modern mind at thus confining all higher goodness to a visible society, did not exist for Paul, because he anticipated a speedy end to the existing state of things. Those who accepted Christ were to be taken out of the world, and the rest of it utterly destroyed. He thought he was building for a generation; but he built better than he knew, and the main lines of his construction still remain, and will still bear a superstructure.

III

The similarity of the Synoptic and the Pauline ethics is a phenomenon which can scarcely be explained historically. In part, no doubt, we may trace in both a continuation and development of the Jewish morality of the time. Recent researches into the works of the Jewish Apocrypha have shown that anticipations of many phases of New Testament morality may be found in such works as the Book of Enoch and the Testaments of the Patriarchs. Dr Charles, in his edition of the latter work, has pointed out approximations in it to the Christian law of forgiveness, and even to the great saying of Jesus as to love to God and one's neighbour. But there seems to be a closer kinship between Master and follower than can thus be accounted for.

This brings us to a question of profound difficulty. It would be natural to suppose that when Paul continues and develops the ethical teaching and tone of Jesus, he adopts what he found already working in the Christian Church in Palestine. One may easily imagine that among the Christians whom he persecuted, there

were some who impressed him by their Christian meekness and fortitude, and made him feel that, whereas he had the power to imprison, they stood on a higher level than he, so that it was nobler to be persecuted than to persecute. One can scarcely suppose that before his conversion he had seen so little of the inner life of Christianity that his mind was a blank page as regards its ethics. Yet he himself had an intense conviction of a personal inspiration, that he owed his views of Christian life and behaviour to the communion with an unseen power, which he regarded as the highest privilege of his life. As he trusted to this personal intercourse with the spiritual world to guide him in his missionary journeys[1] (if indeed we may so far trust the writer of Acts), so he regarded all the best that he had to teach in the Churches as given to him by inspiration of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, as in 1 Corinthians, he gives counsels as coming from his own wisdom, and not by command of his Master; yet he reverts again to the visions and revelations of the Lord as giving him an exceptional authority among the Churches.

There probably was in this matter a certain amount of confusion in the Apostle's mind. He did not distinguish, with the logical precision which is forced upon a modern writer, between the human life of his Master and his exalted dignity. He does not succeed so well as the Fourth Evangelist in bringing the two into one focus. The life of Christ on earth, as continued by the

[1] In these passages in Paul's biography his inspiration appears rather as forbidding this or that journey than as suggesting. Here there is an instructive parallel in the divine adviser of Socrates.

Church, is not by him strongly distinguished from the heavenly life of the exalted Saviour. Logically, this may be a confusion. But many of the greatest steps in human progress have been made possible by logical confusion. And, in her days of transition and formation, the Church owed more than can be expressed to the juxtaposition which was in a great measure effected by Paul.

Thus we need not suppose that the whole of the Christian ethic preached by Paul was a direct revelation to himself. The spirit of the Master went on working in the society, and was communicated, as high principle is communicated, by a sort of contagion from man to man. St Paul, no doubt, absorbed, without being conscious of it, much of the ethical atmosphere of the young society. Yet I think it is difficult in this way altogether to account for the likeness between the ethical outlook of the Founder and that of the Apostle. It is a part of the Disciple's inspiration. And we know so little as yet as to the working of one spirit on another, that it would be the part only of a very superficial dogmatiser to deny the possibility of direct influence of spirit upon spirit, even if one of the two be no longer manifested through the veil of the flesh. The way in which ideas spread in the world, the certain fact that great teachers are often far better represented by those who know but little in regard to them than by their professed disciples, show that there are currents in the world of spirits which are, as yet, scarcely indicated in our charts. Many great writers of fiction—I am at the moment thinking of

Thackeray, of George Eliot, and of Charlotte Brontë—have testified that their most vivid pages have not been worked out by them consciously, but written under an influence which they but dimly understood. The existence of Shakespeare is as hard to explain from the merely natural point of view as is the inspiration of the Pauline ethics.

Paul is fully convinced that no man can, by a mere effort of will, turn from evil to good, from the life of the flesh to that of the spirit. It is only by putting on Christ, by being buried with him, and rising again, that a man can reach the better life. No Gentile by mere practice of morality, no Jew by mere adherence to the law, could escape from the slough, since the natural man would always overpower the spiritual man, and the flesh urge more strongly than even a will set on what was right.

There can be no doubt that we have here the summary of the spiritual experience of Paul. He knew that righteousness could not be reached through the law, or by mere effort of the will, because for half his life his passionate soul had made the attempt, and had made it in vain. He knew what level could be reached by the law-loving Pharisee, and he knew that it was not the level of salvation. If the outer and visible conduct was correct, the heart was full of evil desire and corrupt passion. The attempt he had made to save himself was like an effort to lift himself into the air with his own hands. But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, he was easily lifted by a power not his own. Paul declares repeatedly that

salvation comes by faith. But he does not speak of faith as a great effort of the will, whereby we grasp salvation. Rather, in his view, there are in man many forces which resist the spirit, the flesh (which is always contrary to it), an inherited force of evil, and the urgings of evil demons. But the new power, revealed to the world in Christ, will soon, if it be but allowed free course, sweep away these obstacles, and reign in the heart, redeeming it from sin to God, planting in it the seeds of salvation which must grow up into immortal life.

"While we were enemies," Paul writes, "we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."[1] Christ is formed in the believer,[2] and lives in him, and by the indwelling Christ he is redeemed from sin, and alive to righteousness. To Christ every rebellious thought must be brought into subjection.[3] In Christ the believer is enriched in every gift.[4] Christ is the head of every man, the power which dwells in the heart by faith, our wisdom and our righteousness. Without Christ the Christian is helpless: with Christ he can do all things. Thus a divine righteousness is won by trust in a power which works within.

In a remarkable passage,[5] one of the most pregnant in the Bible, Paul speaks of Christ as the Head, and Christians as parts of the body, the same life-blood running through all, and all the body having a

[1] Rom. v. 10. [2] Gal. iv. 19. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 5.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 4. [5] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

common purpose. Believers are all one in Christ: no member can be injured but all are injured with him; none can be holy but he raises the tone of the community. The Christian Church is as much a unit as is a hive of bees, every inhabitant of which lives only for the rest. Sin against the brethren or any brother is a sin against Christ[1]—a trespass against the common life, which circulates through all. Thus the Church as a whole continues upon the earth the life of its Founder; it renews the incarnation, and shows to human society a mirror of the divine life in heaven.

Thus the morality of Paul, like all his other beliefs and ideas, is directly derived from his doctrine of salvation by faith. The Spirit who had redeemed his own life, and who worked ever in the Church, impelled towards a particular kind of life. He who was united to Christ could not help practising the Christian virtues. If a man who professed to be a Christian did not lead the life, his relation to Christ was but nominal. The blood from the heart did not flow into him, and he was a withered member. The connection between inspiration and conduct, which had been in all the religious societies of the Greeks doubtful and obscure, becomes vital and permanent. Inspiration must bear fruit; and since the fruit is more easily examined and tested than the original inspiration, the practical test of religion becomes of supreme value.

Nowhere does the ethical passion of Paul appear more clearly than in his attack in Rom. vi. and

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 12.

Gal. v. on antinomianism. Subsequent history has shown that, like every great movement of the human spirit, the doctrine of salvation by faith is beset by certain dangers, the worst of which is the notion that if a man have faith he can dispense with virtue in conduct. But Paul scarcely sees the danger. If a man is dead to sin in Christ, how can he live in sin? If he is the servant of Christ, how can he be at the same time the slave of sin? And it is quite true that if men had always interpreted the doctrine of salvation by faith as Paul interprets it, antinomianism could never have threatened the Church. For to Paul faith in Christ is a new life, a death and a resurrection. How should one who lives the life of Christ fall into any of the snares of the evil one? If faith be regarded as a matter of correct opinion, or of mere spiritual excitement and sentiment, it may serve as cover to conceal the surreptitious approach of sin. But if it means a new life, with the flesh in subjection to the spirit, it must bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Paul has always been misunderstood on this side by a certain type of mind, prosaic and literal, which can fathom conduct, but cannot fathom faith. The misunderstanding began very early, as we may see from the polemic against the Pauline doctrine in the Epistle ascribed to James. "The devils," says the writer, "believe, and tremble." Of course, the belief which devils could hold is removed at an infinite distance from the Christian faith as understood by Paul, which is no mere assent but a power working within.

Chapter VIII

THE PAULINE PSYCHOLOGY

I

We have next to consider Paul's psychologic views, his theories as to the nature of body, soul, and spirit, the relations between man on the one hand and angels or devils on the other, the nature and consequences of sin, and the like. It is best frankly to begin with the confession that the psychology of Paul stands at a very different level from his spiritual experience. He was a missionary, a preacher, an organiser, and a great thinker, but he was not a man of science; and psychology is regarded in our days as a branch of observational science. It must be added that the ablest of the Greeks themselves, even Aristotle, have very undeveloped views as to the composition of man, his faculties and limitations. And Paul, as we shall see, merely adopts the psychology current in his time. But, though the Pauline psychology is anything but infallible, it is of very great interest, alike from its bearing upon the Apostle's teaching, and in the light it throws on the condition of the religious world at the time.

Paul is seldom free from inconsistency. In his fervid

brain points of view succeeded one another as he dictated, and at the moment each filled the spaces of his mind and seemed the sum of the truth. He did not turn back to see what he had written before, nor stop to think whether he was not going too far in the statement of a particular doctrine. Unless he had been a man of astonishing mental force, with faculties cleansed by the inrush of a real inspiration, he would have been, like most great religious leaders, quite negligible as a writer on psychology. Modern writers, especially German writers, who read his Epistles in their studies, and expect him always to use words in one sense and to avoid inconsistencies, do him a great injustice. The word "law," for example, he uses in many confused senses: sometimes of the Jewish ceremonial law, sometimes of the law of nature, sometimes of the voice of conscience; but he does not realise this looseness of speech.

Great speculative thinkers found their ethic on psychology. But great men of action are prone to found their psychology upon their ethic. Certain great principles of action are clear to their minds with a vivid distinctness. Such contrasts as that between right and wrong, between soul and body, between God and man, dominate their thought; and it is thence that they form their views of human nature. It is to the class of men of action that Paul eminently belongs. He is fond of contrasting opposite principles, good and evil, sin and salvation, the body and the spirit, that which belongs to the lower or natural order and that which belongs to the higher or spiritual order. The mind of teachers of his kind is like a picture with deep shadows

and high lights, a thing of strong contrasts and marked effects. Subsequent theologians have looked closely into the picture and tried to discern the gradations of shade, the various distances of the background; and often they thus lose the effect which the master intended.

The two great ethical realities for Paul are, first, the facts of sin and grace in the individual soul, and, second, the working of the Divine Spirit in the world and the resistance offered to it by the flesh and by evil spirits. On these facts his psychology is built, or rather it springs out of them.

The question of the nature of sin and the means of deliverance from it intensely interests the Apostle. And so it is from that point of view that it behoves us first to consider his psychology. He seems to have two views in regard to sin, one quasi-historic, and one anthropologic or mystic. Of the first view I speak elsewhere; it sets forth the sin of Adam as a deed in which all descendants of Adam have a share, until one of them, who is the spiritual head of the race, as Adam was its fleshly source, breaks the spell, and makes the pristine innocence once more possible. I call this quasi-historic, not actually historic, because, as we have already seen, the modern notion of history as fact is absent from the mind of Paul. We may compare his view with that of the writer of Ecclesiasticus, who says, "Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die."[1] He, however, is a confirmed misogynist; Paul is too manly to throw the blame on feeble shoulders. But the two theories are parallel.

[1] xxv. 24.

The other view sometimes set forth by Paul regards man as in his very nature prone to sin, because he is a compound being, and the carnal part of him is a stronghold of sin. The Church has been at great pains to reconcile these two ways of accounting for sin, and, proceeding by logic, has fathered on Paul the notion that through the sin of Adam the nature of man was changed, so that thereafter he was under the dominion of sin ruling in the flesh. But Paul does not say this. He makes Adam's sin consist of disobedience to a divine command. And since the whole human race was at the time included and wrapped up in Adam, all men sinned with him, and fell away from divine purity. At bottom there is a radical inconsistency between this view, founded upon the story in Genesis, and Paul's other theory which comes from a different source, and is Greek or quasi-Greek in origin, that man is a spark of the divine nature, clothed in a material body which is a constant source of evil.

II

A good deal of confusion is caused to an English reader by our translators, even those of the revised version, who, in their desire always to use the same English word to represent the same Greek word, are sometimes misleading when one of the Biblical writers uses a word in a modified or fresh sense. For some of the Pauline terms we have fairly good English equivalents; for others we have not. Σῶμα, or body, is a word of fairly clear meaning; and σάρξ, or flesh, is the body regarded more generally, the materiality

or fleshliness of the body. So, too, we use the word "spirit" both for the human spirit and the Divine Spirit, as Paul uses πνεῦμα in both these senses. But another Pauline word, ψυχή, fares worse in our version; the noun ψυχή being rendered *soul* and the adjective ψυχικός being rendered *natural*. Now *natural* is not the adjective of *soul*. The word "soul" is in our ordinary parlance used as the exact equivalent of spirit: to save a man's soul is to save his spirit. And in some of the New Testament writers also ψυχή stands for the immaterial and invisible part of man—the part which is to survive death. In Matthew xi. 29 Jesus promises that those who come to Him shall find rest for their souls or spirits, ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς. But Paul uses the word ψυχή in another way. He contrasts the ψυχικὸν σῶμα with the πνευματικὸν σῶμα, the existing visible body, with the future spiritualised body. ψυχή is to him the principle of the material life on earth, as πνεῦμα is the inner self or spirit. Paul does not, as might a modern psychologist, divide man up into sections, or say that he consists of body, soul, and spirit. But sometimes he uses the word "flesh," sometimes the word "body," and sometimes the word "soul," to indicate the visible and material in man as opposed to that which is invisible and spiritual.

Dr Reitzenstein well observes[1] that when Paul uses the terms I have mentioned, he does not explain them, but assumes that his correspondents will understand them. He adds that "all the different shades

[1] *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, p. 42.

of meaning which the word πνεῦμα has in Paul's writings may be found in classical examples in the magic papyri" which have been recently found in Egypt. "Paul has not developed for himself a peculiar psychology, and a mystic way of speaking in accordance with it, but speaks in the Greek of his time." We even find in the papyri the phrases ἱερὸν πνεῦμα and ἅγιον πνεῦμα.[1]

How far Paul really accepts the view, deeply seated in the mystic religions of Oriental type, that the flesh is essentially and intrinsically evil, a foul prison wherein the spirits of men are immured, has been much disputed. When he writes that the mind of the flesh[2] is at enmity against God, and that those who live after the flesh must die, he seems to regard the flesh as inherently evil. His passionate exclamation, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" expresses the very principle of Oriental asceticism. One could imagine no greater contrast than lies between this view of the body and its physical surroundings and the view taken in the Sermon on the Mount, with its simple joyousness, its delight in the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, its appreciation of the naturalness of the needs of the body, and the divine goodness which broods over every circumstance and event of physical life. But, after all, this is only one side of Paul's belief. In other moods the relation of husband to wife, of children to parents, of friend to friend, the

[1] *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, p. 137.

[2] Rom. φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός, viii. 7.

bonds which bind together the communities not of Christians or of Jews only, but of all mankind, appeal to him in the most human and natural way. When in such a mood, he writes that ascetic abstinences and fastings are matters of indifference. And though the saying, "Every gift of God is good, and nothing to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving," [1] may not have been written by Paul, it expresses one side of his teaching. The fact is that though there is in Paul the root of asceticism, it does not bear fruit, for in him the man is much greater than the ascetic. "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any": is it possible to speak with greater practical sense and wisdom?

We may summarise this side of the Pauline teaching as follows. In man the principle of evil or sin is entrenched in the flesh, and through the flesh makes war upon the spirit, seeking to bring it into subjection. The spirit wars against the flesh, but cannot overcome it save by the aid of the Divine Spirit working in man. Thus through grace only can man be saved, and grace is given through entering into the life of Christ, who came into the world to redeem us from the power of sin working in and through the body.

In this very simple and practical framework we can in places detect insertions of Greek theory which scarcely fit their context. For example, at the end of the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul speaks of the intellect (νοῦς, mind) as appreciating and loving the law of God, but being overborne in practice by the

[1] Tim. iv. 4.

evil tendencies of the body. In another part of the same Epistle (ii. 14) he says that the Gentiles who had not the Mosaic law had an inner law of conscience. This principle, that the mind of man can by thought find out what is good, is the principle of Greek philosophy, and is hardly to be reconciled with Pauline views.[1] The Apostle is more at home when he writes that the senseless heart of the Gentiles, professing wisdom, became folly, and led them first into idolatry and then into all manner of uncleanness. The inconsistency here, as elsewhere, arises from the extreme sanity and practical tendency of the Apostle's mind. When his fervid thought has carried him too far in one direction, he suddenly becomes conscious that he is going beyond the bounds of reality, and other sides of that truth which has an infinite number of sides invade his mind.

III

Passing from the phenomena of sin in individuals to the broader field of the world, we find a vaster conflict going on. The contest here is not so much between spirit and flesh as between the spirits of good and the spirits of evil, though the latter, no doubt, may take occasion from the flesh, and work through it.

Of good angels Paul does not speak much. The chief mention of them is in Col. i. 11; and there the Apostle is protesting against a worship of angels which seems to have been making way at Colossae,

[1] I do not regard the speech at Athens as a satisfactory exposition of Paul's views. See *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 399.

and which he regards as inconsistent with the true Christian faith. The root of this heresy lay, no doubt, in the speculation of Alexandria, and at a later time it had full vogue among the Gnostics. A celestial hierarchy, "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," may well at that time have occupied the same place which in the later Church was taken by saints and martyrs, as intermediaries between God and man, beings more approachable than the one supreme Deity. It is quite in accordance with the spiritual good sense of the Apostle that he should have seen here at once the entrance of corruption, and protested against it in the name of the Christian faith. If, he says, there be angels of various ranks, "in Christ were all things created, in the heavens as upon the earth, things visible, and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him: and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." Such is the barrier which the Christian faith of the Apostle erects to shut the young society away from a path of danger.

The evil spirits, under their chief Satan, are of incessant activity and enormous power. They have succeeded in establishing in the world, especially the heathen world, an almost undisputed sway. Indeed, the gods of the nations are evil dæmons who have persuaded men to worship them. But by the death of Christ, and the vast outpouring of spiritual force which it occasioned, the realm of Satan was shattered. No dæmon could resist the name of Christ, and the power of his spirit.

This is a side of the early history of Christianity which the modern mind is apt to neglect, in spite of many passages in Acts and the testimony of all early Christian writers. There was going on in all Western Asia a fierce competition in the exercise of spiritual powers, in faith-healing, in miracle, in prophecy, between the different religions which were fighting over the corpse of the ancient national cults. It was like the contest between Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt before Pharaoh, when all alike transformed their staves into serpents; but the serpent which was produced from the rod of Aaron swallowed up the serpents of the magicians. No one could establish a religious reputation without having a reputation for working signs and wonders; and in the view of the people he who produced the greatest marvels had the best right to claim attention.[1] Simon Magus, envying the power of Philip the Deacon in producing wonders and miracles, thought that he could bribe the Apostles to make over this power to him. Elymas the Sorcerer, in Cyprus, tried to compete with Paul and Barnabas in signs and wonders, and was struck blind by the power which worked through Paul. Of course it is an open, and not an easy, question, how far these abnormal powers were really at work, and how far they were the result of popular imagination. Such

[1] M. Doutté, in the *Revue de l'Hist. des Religions*, xl. p. 355, writes in regard to Algeria, "I myself, in my duty as native administrator, have never spoken to the Arabs about a local saint, even about one still living, without hearing of some recent miracle of his." And in the stories told to M. Doutté, the possible and the impossible, the reasonable and the extravagant, were mixed with delightful *naïveté*.

phenomena belong especially to the times of religious unrest and excitement. The crisis which is stirring the unseen spirit of humanity, takes strange forms in the visible world of men and women.

The *Acta Pauli*, a work of the Antonine age, lays great stress on the miracles of Paul.[1] We find it an almost invariable rule that the histories of great religious leaders deal more in miracle in proportion to their distance from the subject of the biography. In the same way, during the lifetime of such leaders, those who are furthest from their spirit are those who most eagerly expect miracle from them, and most readily give a miraculous turn to any unusual manifestation.

The Apostle believed, with all his heart, that since Jesus came into the world, and especially since he departed from it, there had been working among men a Divine Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit, the manner of its working, are twofold. In the propagation of the faith and in its war upon the heathen world, the power of the Spirit is seen most completely in a startling and cataclysmic form ; while in the inner life of the Church the divine fire burns with a steadier and more constant lustre.

Wherever the Gospel spread it was accompanied by signs and wonders. Those who opposed its preaching were overthrown and confounded. Those who came into the Church, whether by baptism or the laying on of hands, were filled with new and strange powers, power over physical disease, power to speak with tongues, power to interpret, power in preaching and

[1] Duchesne, *Early History of the Church*, p. 370.

prophesying. Among these powers Paul includes what we are disposed to regard as a mysterious and almost incredible gift, but what Paul places quite simply among the rest, the power to work miracles.

The word used by Paul for power to work miracles is *δύναμις*, which is quite vague. Possibly he did not discriminate clearly between spiritual power and physical miracle. But of any claim to power to set aside physical law, or of any belief that his Master had done so, there is no trace in the Epistles. Even when he speaks of the Resurrection, he tries to explain it as parallel to the ordinary and natural springing of blades of corn from the grain.

It is a clear sign of the wonderful sense and moderation of Paul that these extraordinary and, so to speak, militant gifts in the Church, play but a very small part in his Epistles. We know that in modern religious revivals the phenomena of faith-healing, of trance, of speaking with tongues, run riot. And if we turn to the Acts we find them very prominent, and appearing in startling forms. Luke has a strong tendency to introduce them, and to make much of them. He tells us many tales of the miraculous workings which accompanied the Apostles. When Elymas in Cyprus opposes the preaching of Paul, he is stricken with blindness. When Peter is imprisoned by Herod, an angel of God comes to him in prison and brings him out into liberty. When Peter rebukes Ananias and Sapphira, they fall dead at his feet. When in Malta a viper fastens on the hand of Paul, he shakes it off, and feels no harm. Paul, indeed, is credited with so great

a power that kerchiefs which had been in contact with him healed the sick. The account given in Acts of the speaking in tongues by the Apostles puts it on a level of miracle, for the utterances of those inspired are not in unknown tongues, but in the languages current in various countries in the east of the Mediterranean.

Amid all this scene of miracles Paul moves with quiet dignity. He does not deny miracle, but he also does not highly esteem it. Infinitely more important and noble in his eyes than the visible and catastrophic works of the Spirit are the inward workings in the hearts of believers. He prefers rational preaching to speaking with tongues. He thinks more highly of visions and revelations of the Lord than of the power of faith-healing. Above all the gifts of the Church he sets the virtue of Christian charity.

Thus, in comparing the gifts of the Spirit, he makes most of those which tend not to striking terror into unbelievers, but to building up the Church in love. The fruit of inspiration which he places highest is speaking with wisdom and faith. And by wisdom he means not profound knowledge, nor the possession of secret lore, but the good sense which tends to the building up of the Church.

Paul's teaching in regard to the gifts or *charismata* of the early Church is, like all his teaching, steeped in his doctrine of salvation by faith. The power of living a higher and more effective life came by a communication of the Divine Spirit. To him it was still the Spirit of Christ which thus worked in the world. It was the life of Christ still being realised in the world

which overcame the dæmons and gave rise to every kind of spiritual excellence. Christ was the source of all Christian virtue, and obedience to Christ was the channel by which power flowed into the lives of believers.

The same phenomena are spoken of by other writers in the New Testament in somewhat different language. The Synoptists record that when Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and soon afterwards led him into the wilderness to be tempted. The casting out of demons was one of the chief of the Christian charismata; and in Matthew (xii. 28) Jesus claims to exercise this power by the Spirit of God. The power of healing diseases and casting out devils by the Holy Spirit was passed on by Jesus to the twelve Apostles and the seventy disciples. Matthew and Luke report Jesus as saying that the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to all who ask him. But it is in the Fourth Gospel that we find a definite promise of Jesus that, when he is departed, he will send the Holy Spirit to comfort his disciples and to work with them. In Acts there is ample fulfilment of this promise. The Holy Spirit was first imparted to the Apostles, either by the breath of Jesus (John xx. 22) or on the day of Pentecost, as is related in Acts. And thereafter the preaching of the word was constantly accompanied by manifestations of the Holy Spirit, which enabled the converts to speak with tongues and to prophesy, and marked their reception into the Church. It was usually by the laying on of the Apostles' hands that the energy of the Holy Spirit

was communicated. Some of these charismata, such as the speaking with tongues, are not heard of during the life of Jesus, and are exercised not by him but by the early Church.

We find, then, an alternative explanation of the spirit of power and holiness which worked effectually in the mission-field of early Christianity. Luke does not speak of the exalted Christ, but of the Divine Spirit, as the source of that power. And Paul sometimes speaks in the same way. It is, however, noteworthy that Paul does not develop any doctrine in regard to the Divine Spirit—at all events he does not personify the Spirit. Perhaps he comes nearest to this when he writes (Rom. viii. 26), "We know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The office of Intercessor is in Hebrews especially claimed for the exalted Christ: and we cannot be sure that Paul had, in using his phrase, any other notion. We have already observed that this remarkable indifference to names and theories is of the essence of the Pauline theology. There never was a thinker who more decisively set fact and experience above theory and doctrine.

Luke carries this way of speaking even into his account of the travels of Paul. He narrates how the Holy Spirit set aside Barnabas and Saul for missionary work, how Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit fell on his disciples. He says that Paul's plan of preaching in Asia was set aside by the prohibition of the Holy Spirit. He puts in the mouth

of Paul a statement that the Holy Spirit warned him of persecutions impending in every city. Of course it was faith in Christ which the Apostles preached, and in the name of Christ they faced the powers of darkness. Peter says to Æneas (Acts ix. 34), "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." But the acts of the community and inward workings in individuals are ordinarily said to be the work of the Divine Spirit.

In this matter there is an inconsistency between Luke and Paul, though an inconsistency by no means amounting to a contradiction. It is the ordinary manner of Paul to attribute the impulses which made up his inspiration, and his call to labour, to directions received from his Master in heaven. Yet Paul himself often uses language like that of Luke, which was indeed probably the language used generally in the early Christian society. He speaks in clear language as to the charismata, the gifts of healing, of tongues, and the like, as being bestowed by the Divine Spirit.

To him the Holy Spirit is also the giver of Christian peace and joy, and the implanter in the souls of believers of love to God. It is, in fact, impossible to make a rigid distinction in the Pauline Epistles between the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Christ. Life in Christ and life in the Spirit are the same. It is by partaking of the Holy Spirit that believers grow into Christ. In 1 Cor. xv. 45 Paul says that the last Adam, that is Christ, was made a life-giving Spirit. In 2 Cor. iii. 17 he says, "The Lord is the Spirit." Paul sometimes falls into the way, which seems to have been usual among the Christians of his time, of speaking

of the life of the Christian community as a manifestation of the Divine Spirit, and sometimes he speaks in words which more especially belong to himself of the indwelling Christ. I will but further cite three verses of the Roman Epistle, viii. 9: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Here the words "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ," "Spirit," and "Christ" are all used interchangeably.

But though Paul makes no rigid distinction—and a rigid distinction was perhaps impossible in face of the facts,—yet we may perhaps discern in the Pauline Epistles a tendency towards distinction. When Paul speaks of the charismata, the visible signs which accompanied the preaching of the Gospel, he calls them the fruits of the Spirit. He thinks of the Divine Spirit as ever at issue with spirits of evil and the lusts of the flesh, as an indwelling Power which enables men to enter into the Christian life. And while he regards that life as life in the Spirit, yet he more frequently and readily speaks of it as the life of Christ, of the converts as always sharing the life and the obedience of the divine Head. Thus we shall scarcely be far from the mark if we interpret the Pauline thought as regarding the Divine Spirit as a visible power to impel men into the Christian fold, and the mystic Christ as including all those who have entered into it. This is not the Lucan view; but it

may perhaps be the Pauline, though it might not be hard to find passages in the Epistles which are not quite in harmony with it, and the distinction would be in any case only verbal.

The Fourth Evangelist seems to be aware of this theological difficulty when he writes (iii. 34) that God gives to his Son the Spirit without measure. Thus the works of the Son are also the works of the Spirit. Paul does not seem to be troubled by the apparent inconsistency.

As Paul built his psychology upon the facts of conduct, so he built his theology upon the facts of his missionary experience. Like all great leaders, he cared infinitely more for facts and experience than for words and formulæ. It is difficult to imagine a more complete contrast than that presented by his way of speaking of spiritual realities with the way followed by those who drew up the creeds of later Christendom. Paul cares not for what things are called, but for what they are. He had experienced inward renovation, and had been admitted to the sublime privilege of intercourse with a great spiritual Power. He had seen that Power accompanying the working of the Apostles with power to heal disease, to cast out demons, to preach in ecstasy. Wherever the Gospel of Christ was preached, signs and wonders accompanied it. And these were not merely external; a change of heart and of life, peace and joy in believing, a new spirit in dealing with one's fellow-men, came upon those who accepted Christ. They were made a new creation, and the barriers which had divided class from class and race from race

vanished away at the touch of a new kinship. Even the line which, as a Jew, Paul had regarded as most essential—the distinction between Jew and Gentile—disappeared, and both alike became members of the earthly body of Christ and vessels filled with the Divine Spirit.

An intellect so keen and aggressive as that of Paul was of course obliged to think about these marvels, and to bring them into some sort of intellectual order. But such thinking does not result in a carefully articulated system, but in a number of detached and sometimes inconsistent views, fused by the fire of imagination and enthusiasm into a sort of nebula, whence many new planets may arise in the course of cooling.

Chapter IX

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

In the intellectual interpretation of inspiration every great teacher is apt to err, nay, must necessarily err. For the prophet interprets his teaching into the current language of a period or a school. And as he is by no means always a master of the art of thinking, and is always of limited outlook, he will state his teaching imperfectly, and sometimes in ways obviously unsatisfactory and incomplete. He gives abundant justification to those who do not wish to agree with him.

Paul also has his intellectual and his moral limitations. How far, in spite of them, he has succeeded in stating his message in ways suited to all time, or at least suited to all time up to the present, we shall try hereafter to judge.

Doctrine is an intellectual rendering of spiritual experience and of the needs of the practical life. I have elsewhere [1] maintained that such experience gives rise to a variety of expressions. In relation to the past, it takes form, in primitive times, in myth; in later times, in ethical or ideal history. In relation to the future

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica*, chap. x.

it takes form in prophecy. In relation to the present it gives birth to doctrine in one direction, in other directions to rites and to organisation. It does not immediately inspire these manifestations, nor do they arise contemporaneously; but they are worked out by degrees, by the unconscious spirit of a race or a society, uttering itself through the voices of religious leaders and prophets.

The Pauline principle or idea of faith in Christ does not in the case of Paul himself work itself out in all directions, though it is wonderful to what a degree he gives it expression. As regards the past, his whole conception of history is coloured by his beliefs. The narratives in the Old Testament are by him scarcely regarded as detailing events in the world of time and sense. They are partly mere symbols, allegories to be interpreted, partly reflections in the world of sense of that which is in the heavens. The history of the Jews becomes to him a story of which the key is to be found only in Christian belief. Adam, Abraham, Moses are scarcely more real characters to him than is Melchizedek to the writer of Hebrews: they are types, images, the embodiments of ideas. If he had had before him standard written lives of Jesus, he might have used them in the same fashion. He has left us no life of his Master, written from his own point of view. Indeed, he says very little as to the events of that life: he is resolved, as he says, not to know "Christ after the flesh." Yet traces of Pauline influence are to be found in the Gospel of Luke, and even, in a slighter degree, in that of Mark. And for the Fourth

Gospel he paves the way. It may be said with perfect confidence that but for the Pauline school of Christianity, the Fourth Gospel could never have been written. It probably took its rise at Ephesus, where the influence of Paul was great.

There is not much prophecy of the future of a definite character to be found in the Epistles. Paul accepted the views current in the Christian society as to the imminent end of the world and the Second Coming: at any rate he accepted them for most of his life. In one or two passages he ventures to predict the exact circumstances of the Parousia and the order of rising from the dead. Here, of course, he failed, as have failed all prophets of all times who have tried to foretell the external sequence of events in the future. But he wrote no Apocalypse. And no one was more effective than he in turning the thought and hope of Christians towards the future of the Church on earth rather than towards a coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven.

The great Apostle, with his intensely practical nature, belonged consciously to his age, though often unconsciously to the future. In all the embodiments of his ideas which had reference to the present he was supremely effective. He was the great originator of Church doctrine. He gave the tone for ages to the great rites of the Church. And he laid down the lines upon which, as soon as it began to be organised, its organisation proceeded.

We may sum up, almost in the words of the Apostle, Paul's view in regard to Christ. It is as follows.

Jesus Christ was a heavenly being,[1] destined from times eternal for human redemption,[2] in whom and through whom all things were created both in heaven and earth.[3] Being rich, for our sakes he became poor;[4] being in the image of God, he counted it not an object of ambition to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave him the name which is above every name, that every tongue should call him Lord.[5] Ere long this same Lord shall descend from heaven, with a shout, and the voice of the archangel,[6] to gather the saints to himself. Under his feet shall all things be put, until the end, when he shall deliver the Kingdom to God the Father; and then the Son also shall be subject to God, that God may be all in all.[7]

We must analyse this body of doctrine, to see what it really amounts to. And this analysis may best be arranged under the heads of the three great Christian doctrines, of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Exaltation.

I

Paul's doctrine of the Incarnation arose from the working of his religious experience on elements already existing in his mind as in the minds of many

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 47. [2] Eph. i. 4. [3] Col. i. 15. [4] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[5] Phil. ii. 9. [6] 1 Thess. iv. 16. [7] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

of his Jewish contemporaries. These elements had been absorbed by the Jews of the Diaspora, at such centres as Alexandria, Tarsus, Ephesus, and Antioch; but their origins must be sought in the philosophic thought and the mystic enthusiasms of the Hellenistic age.

The mystic societies of the heathen world, with which in the great cities of Asia the Jewish Synagogues would have a close juxtaposition, were wont to regard the special divine being with whom their cult was concerned as representative for their community of the supreme divine power. The supreme Deity of the Jews could never, in the minds of those properly instructed in their religion, take a place beside Sabazius or Sarapis as the special protector of a chosen few. He must remain always to his people the transcendent Deity. But the influence of neighbours and fellow-citizens might well foster the view, which steadily spread through the Synagogues of the Diaspora, of the need of a Divine mediator on closer terms with mankind than the severe Deity whose throne was heaven and whose footstool earth.

It has been shown by recent research that the notion of an exalted spiritual Messiah, who should come from heaven and was to return thither, who was to be no mere earthly king and conquerer, but a great angelic being, was by no means unknown among the Jews at the time of the birth of Jesus. Such a supernatural Messiah is shadowed forth in the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. and xviii.) and in the book of Enoch (chap. xlviii.). To such thought the Messiah was pre-existent in heaven, waiting to be revealed to men, the prince of angels.

Indeed, we find in the Jewish Apocrypha traces of the same range of conceptions of the Messiah which we discern in the Christian Fathers and the *Paradise Lost* of Milton.

The writings of Philo are pre-Pauline, and wholly independent of Christianity in any form. And they furnish us with an undeniable proof that the school of Alexandria had at the beginning of our era worked out a Logos doctrine, a theory of a semi-personal divine Wisdom or Word, mediating between the transcendent deity and the visible world, an architect of the universe, who also conveyed to mankind the commands and the purposes of God. This divine interpreter or emanation is in Philo sketched but in vague outline, as an element in a mystic theosophy. In some of the books of the Jewish Apocrypha this vague form becomes more concrete as the national Messiah. "So much is certain," writes Wrede,[1] "that Jewish apocalyptic books are really cognisant of a Messiah, who before his appearance lives in heaven, and is more exalted than the angels themselves."

Another form of the same tendency, acting not in the schools but in the crowded cities, is shown us in that passage in Acts (viii. 10) in which Simon Magus is spoken of. He was regarded generally by the people of Samaria as a divine impersonation, as "that power of God which is called great." Here we find, in the conceptions of a people who combined Jewish beliefs with those of the surrounding races of Syria, a somewhat different notion, that of a human being who manifests

[1] *Paul*, trans., p. 152.

on earth the same phase of the supreme Deity which is also embodied in the heavenly Messiah. From all sides there are converging tendencies ready to be embodied in a new and conquering faith.

It was his zeal for the law which had led Paul to persecute the Christians. It is natural that from his later standpoint this early hostility to the name of Christ filled him with horror. Modern writers do not find it altogether easy to explain the fierceness of this hatred: for we must remember that, at the time of Paul's conversion, Christianity still appeared to the world as a Jewish sect, and not as a rival to Judaism. There were no Gentiles in the Church; the Apostles kept the law, some of them, such as James, with a zeal not inferior to Paul's own. It would, however, seem from the extreme emphasis which in all the Pauline writings is laid on the death on the cross, that it was this which in early days stirred Paul to hostile passion. That one who had suffered a felon's death should be set up as the promised Messiah, this seemed to him intolerable. He had, as we have already seen,[1] accepted the view that the Messiah must be a glorious son of God revealed on earth in splendour and majesty. The identification of the Messiah with the Logos, which appears in a developed form in the Fourth Gospel, must have dwelt in the background of the mind of Paul, even before his conversion. And the claim to this exalted position, set up on behalf of one who had been publicly gibbeted at Jerusalem, carried him beyond opposition into persecution.

[1] Chap. ii. p. 26.

It was the shameful death of Jesus which roused Paul's bitter indignation when the Christians put forward as the Messiah one who had died the death of a felon. But when once the risen Jesus Christ had revealed himself to his chosen missionary, this difficulty vanished. It was no longer the disgraced sufferer who claimed his heart and his worship, but an exalted son of God. And the past was so glorified by the glow of the present that it was raised out of the mere frame of history into the life of the spiritual world, which the educated Jews of the time regarded, in their semi-Platonic philosophy, as lying above and beyond the world of time and sense. Then the loftiest Messianic views of Paul found at once a Being to whom they could safely be attached. And his intellect went on fearlessly to frame a doctrine, to embody what was already a conviction raised beyond the level of doubt.

With the conviction of the divine Messiahship of Jesus, and his unmeasured condescension to the death of the cross, there entered into the heart of Paul an unquenchable flame of love and gratitude. Again and again in his Epistles he returns to the theme of the love which Christ bore to men, demanding in return a life of love and devotion. Even the Fourth Evangelist is scarcely more insistent on this topic than Paul. Christ, he says, "died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died."[1] "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish,

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14.

or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"[1] "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."[2] "Walk in love, as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us."[3] The mixture of love and gratitude forms one of the strongest passions which can dominate the heart of man. In the case of Paul we know that his words do but imperfectly express the flame of devotion which burned all through his life, bearing him lightly through peril and pain and wounds, and furnishing him with a power which no adversary could resist.

The Pauline doctrine of the κένωσις is very characteristic of the man. His teaching as regards this self-emptying of Christ springs directly out of religious needs and religious experience, and is very difficult to state in defensible form. Paul could not deny that to his first disciples and to his contemporaries Jesus had appeared as an ordinary man with human faculties and human limitations. Yet he regarded the appearance on earth under the forms of time and space as but one phase of an exalted and celestial existence. That could only take place by a voluntary surrender of divine powers, a voluntary self-obliteration in a human form. As Paul tells us next to nothing as to the events of the human life, and in fact seems purposely to avoid thinking of it, we cannot tell exactly how he would have applied his doctrine to it. But it seems to offer a refuge from the docetism which soon invaded the Church, and which has, we may add, shown so marked a revival in what is considered orthodoxy in modern

[1] Rom. viii. 35. [2] Eph. iii. 19. [3] Eph. v. 2.

days. It dispenses one from making a mere mirage of the human life, and from interpreting in some forced and non-natural way such exquisitely human passages as the scene in the garden of Gethsemane and the sufferings on the cross. In all ages Christianity has shown a strong tendency to explain away or to obliterate what is human in Jesus. No teacher could have had a greater temptation to take this line than Paul; and that he escapes the temptation is a great mark, I do not say of his wisdom, but of his inspiration. It cannot be said that the Fourth Evangelist is equally successful.

But while Paul avoids the open snare of docetism, he is equally free from what may be called the Jesuitic tendency, the tendency to lay great emphasis on the human sufferings of Jesus. Of this there is in Paul no trace. To him the crucifixion is an event of history, but its terrible torture and anguish are for him lost in the higher and spiritual aspects of the great event. The humiliation of an exalted spiritual Power to the most painful of deaths has greatly stirred the Apostle's heart and imagination; that it was undergone for us is a perpetual claim on our gratitude, a claim so strong that we no longer are our own, but belong to Him who died for us. But to make much of the outward surroundings of the suffering would be to dwell on Christ after the flesh.

In order fully to understand the Christology of Paul, we must always bear in mind the gulf which separates his notion of history from the scientific conception of it current in the modern world. He does not regard

historic events as links in a long chain of cause and effect, as phenomena not less objective than the succession of summer and winter, of eclipse and of comet. To him history is a mere reflection on earth of a heavenly drama, a display in time of the hidden meaning of things. Whether this reflection and display actually appeared to mortal senses, or whether it was only supposed to have appeared, was not a question which disturbed his mind. It was the spiritual meaning, not the material embodiment, which seemed to him the important thing. Thus the phases of his Master's existence, though he naturally sets them forth as successive, are in his mind rather connected in essence than in time. They are phases of the eternal Christ, and the distinction which the modern mind sees between them,—that the earthly phase can be inquired into by historic methods, while the heavenly phases are rather matters of belief—this distinction does not impress him. The abyss between the earthly Jesus and the transcendent Son of God—an abyss which we have to pass either on the wings of faith or on a causeway piled by reason—does not for him exist.

The Apostle is content to place the three phases of the existence of Jesus Christ, so to speak, side by side, without concerning himself as to the transition from one to another. But though his speculative Christology is thus rudimentary, his views as to the relation of the life of Christ to that of mankind, and especially of the Church, are clear and strong. His whole nature was intensely practical. The things he regarded were

action, morality, life, and his theories have an immediate relation to those, scarcely any to metaphysical or theological speculation.

His view of the Incarnation seems to be that Christ, by appearing in the flesh, had redeemed it, had taken away its dominance over the spirit, and made a new life possible on earth. In the Epistle to the Colossians we read of the Son as a visible image of the invisible God,[1] the fullness or pleroma of God in bodily form.[2] It causes us some surprise to find that such phrases as these, which were familiar to the Gnostics, appear really to come from Paul. It is indeed not the nature of Christ's appearing in the flesh, but the consequences of it which interest the Apostle. Compared with his view of the Incarnation, his view of the Atonement is more fully developed.

II

The Pauline view of the Atonement is fully set forth in the great Epistles. We cannot say that it has a historic basis, for with Paul human history is merged in the processes of the underlying spiritual world. Thus history is adapted to beliefs based on Christian experience. What we must rather say is that the doctrine is thrown into historic or historico-mythic form, by being regarded as correlative to the sin of Adam. When Adam was disobedient, and was condemned to die, all his descendants were with him condemned. The obedience of Christ, appearing for

[1] Col. i. 15. [2] Col. ii. 9.

our sakes in the flesh, does away with the disobedience of Adam. And as by natural descent all inherit the hostility to God which was the consequence of Adam's sin, so those who, by spiritual descent, are the children of Christ inherit the consequence of his obedience, and are reconciled to God. As natural death was brought into the world by Adam's transgression—Adam being a principle, rather than a historic person — so eternal life is brought into the world by the death of Christ on the cross. "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."[1]

It is Paul's contemporary, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who fully worked out the notion of the propitiatory death of Jesus: that the Jewish sacrifices of atonement were but types and foreshadowings of a greater sacrifice to come; that Jesus, by offering himself as a sin-offering for the people, took upon himself their transgressions. We are accustomed to regard the teaching of the substitutionary death of Jesus and his atoning sacrifice as a Pauline doctrine. But it is exceedingly difficult to say how far that teaching was clear and definite in the mind of the Apostle. The passages on the subject in the Epistles are singularly difficult of interpretation.

In 1 Cor. v. 7 we find the phrase, "Our passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ." But the Passover was not a sacrifice of propitiation, and the whole

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21; *cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 22.

context shows that Paul introduces the phrase without much intention; what he is dwelling on is the eating of unleavened bread at the Passover, and the need that Christians should put away the leaven of wickedness, and keep the feast with the unleavened bread of purity and truth. The whole passage is thoroughly ethical; and the allusions to the Feast of the Passover, which probably were suggested by the fact that while Paul wrote the Passover was being celebrated, are only intended as illustration. The writer of the Fourth Gospel goes much further.

There is a passage in Rom. iii. 21–26 which seems to set forth the doctrine of a propitiatory sacrifice and a substituted righteousness, and in our English text may naturally be read in that sense. I would venture on a free rendering: "But now, apart from the law, a divine righteousness has been made (possible and) actual, of which the law and the prophets speak (in anticipation). This divine righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who have faith. [I say all, because there is no difference (between Jew and Gentile); all have sinned and fall short of the glorious image of God.] They have a free gift of righteousness by divine grace through the liberation by Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a way of reconcilement, through His death, by means of faith, in order that divine righteousness might be showed, God having in His forbearance passed over the former sins, in order that this righteousness might be exhibited (by men) in the present age; that God might be just, and make

just (or reckon as just) him who is a child of faith in Jesus."[1]

The passage thus read asserts clearly the doctrine that the righteousness which is the image on earth of the divine righteousness can be attained by men only through faith in Christ, and that Christ has made it possible to men by the sacrifice of his life. But it may be questioned whether it asserts that the death of Jesus Christ was a substitutionary sacrifice, that God accepted the blood of Christ in the place of the death which men deserved for their sins, according to the ideas of ancient sacrifice. And it does not countenance the notion of a forensic attribution of the righteousness of Christ to his followers. The doctrine of Atonement, as later understood in the Church, is implied in the Fourth Gospel and in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but I do not believe that it is asserted by Paul. The question is, however, one of historic rather than of religious importance, since it is only a question whether Paul worked out a view to its corollaries, or left those

[1] It is impossible even to summarise the unending discussions of this passage by the commentators, or the various views which they set forth. In defence of the general rendering above set forth, I will only speak of the force of two or three of the most important words. The reader who wishes for a more detailed discussion must refer to a regular commentary. That of Sanday and Headlam gives the main points well. Δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, "a righteousness of God," I regard as righteousness of divine type, but exhibited on earth and by man, that is, by the Christian. Ἀπολύτρωσις, "redemption," need not have any notion of a price paid: it may well mean only deliverance or liberation. Ἱλαστήριον, "a propitiation," is probably not neuter, but masculine accusative, agreeing with ὄν, "a reconciling person," or a person who reconciles, by passing through death, or by obedience to death.

corollaries to be worked out by his followers. But it raises one's opinion of the extraordinary sanity of Paul's judgment, and his insight, that he could be so near to the substitutionary view of the Atonement without accepting it. He was in fact kept from accepting it by his view of the nature of faith, which was, as we have seen, of an extremely practical kind. He regarded salvation as consisting in the continuing of the life of Christ and sharing his obedience, but not in being merely justified, as in a law-court, by a fictitious claim to merit which one did not possess.[1]

I think that other passages in the Pauline Epistles may be interpreted in a not dissimilar way. For example, 2 Cor. v. 21, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Here the phrase "righteousness of God" means, as before, divine righteousness in men. And when the Apostle says that God made Christ to be sin, he seems to mean that God inflicted on Christ the death which is the usual and natural punishment of sin, that death being the only way by which Christ could become the exalted object of the Christian faith, which is the only source of the Christian life.

It is pointed out by commentators that in the Pharisaic theology of the time forgiveness of sins cannot take place without punishment of the offender,

[1] I regret that in an earlier work (*Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 402) I did not clearly distinguish the Pauline teaching from that of other writers, and so misjudged the great Apostle.

or of some one in his place, and that the world is redeemed by the voluntary suffering of the good on behalf of mankind. So much Paul doubtless accepted; but the working out of a theory of substitution, and of the transfer of righteousness from Christ to the Church, does not seem to belong to the Pauline writings. With the Apostle all doctrine is in a fluid state; it could not coagulate into regular dogma until the heat of the first Christian inspiration was dying down.

No doubt it is very difficult for a reader, in studying an ancient author, to cut away the implications which his followers have seen in his words, and to realise exactly what they meant *to him*. But at the same time this attempt must always be made as the very first requirement of the critical method.

Dr Schechter observes,[1] "We have in Judaism both the notions of imputed righteousness and imputed sin. They have, however, never attained such significance either in Jewish theology or in Jewish conscience as it is generally assumed. By a happy inconsistency, in the theory of salvation, so characteristic of Rabbinic theology, the importance of these doctrines is reduced to very small proportions, so that their effect was in the end beneficial, and formed a healthy stimulus to conscience."

In later days, when the speculative view of the divinity of Christ was further developed, there arose theories or doctrines which took a forensic form. Something like a law-court was imagined, in which Satan appeared as the plaintiff demanding the persons

[1] *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 170.

of those who had sinned (that is, of all mankind), in which the claim of the spirit of evil was bought off by weighing against the sufferings of the sinless Christ the punishment due to sinners, and in which sin was transferred from the sinner to Christ, and merit from Christ to the sinner. In the mind of Paul such views did not exist, even if the rudiments out of which they developed are to be traced. What he dwells on is the incorporation of the race in Jesus Christ, so that the race in his person suffers the death which is the natural consequence of sin, just as in Adam all his descendants were condemned to suffering for disobedience to a divine command. To us this incorporation of many in one is apt to appear as a metaphor, or at most as a kind of legal fiction. But to Paul it is something definite and real, a fact the consequences of which take their place in the most objective way in the world of fact. In Adam his descendants already existed, and with him they went astray. In Christ they returned to God, unless they withdrew voluntarily from union with him, and preferred death to life.

When Paul speaks of Christ as the archetypal or ideal man, the type of man existing in the divine purpose from the beginning, the second Adam, heavenly as the first Adam was earthly, he speaks language to which we are so accustomed in Plato and the Platonists that we do not find it very difficult. According to Plato the divine types or ideas of all earthly things existed in a supersensual world; the earthly was but a partial embodiment of the heavenly. The thought of Plato was so simple, so lofty, so attractive, that it

permeated all thought in succeeding ages. No man of intellect could think in independence of it. We know how deeply it impressed Philo and the Jews of Alexandria. Nevertheless the origin of Paul's view is probably more nearly connected with the thought of Jewish rabbis in his own age than with the school of Plato. He quotes Scripture (*It is written*) as stating,[1] "The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." That does not correspond to our text of Genesis; but we are told that the Jewish interpreters of the time had regarded the statement in Gen. i. 26; "Let us make man in our own image," as implying a making of an ideal man, before God proceeded, as in Gen. ii. 7, to make an actual man out of the dust of the ground. Probably Paul had heard this interpretation in the synagogues, or at the feet of Gamaliel, before he became a Christian. And it was in this transfigured form that Platonic notions reached him.

Not being a physiologist, I do not venture to discuss the question whether modern discoveries as to the nature of heredity may not give some fresh sanction to the Pauline views, or whether they may be translated into the language of science. The incorporation of the individual in the race, the perpetuity of the type which seems almost to surmount time, are notions which must needs have an immense effect on the thought of the future. They set a limit to the conception of man as an individual, which has certainly been carried too far during the last centuries. But this clue I must leave to others to follow up.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45.

III

Whereas the Pauline doctrine of the mystic Christ, the Christ who dwells in and inspires the Church, is a great and permanent possession of the Christian society, the Pauline view of the heavenly existence of his exalted Master partook of the limitations of the age. It is owing to the wonderful inspiration of Paul that the crudeness of his Christologic views is not conspicuous.

We must begin by setting aside the Lucan description of the appearance of the exalted Jesus to Paul at Damascus. That something then occurred deeply to impress the Apostle is very probable; but when we come to the details, everything turns on shades of expression, and the description is, as we have seen, Lucan and not Pauline.[1]

Paul moves in quite a different atmosphere from Luke. His theory of a spiritual resurrection body is quite inconsistent with the early Christian materialism which is so marked in the last chapter of Luke's Gospel. No doubt he believed that his Lord retained a body of some kind, and would in that body return to dwell on a transformed earth, to exalt his saints, and to punish those who rejected his gospel. He speaks in one place, in language borrowed from a Psalm, of Jesus as sitting at the right hand of God;[2] but he redeems

[1] See above, chap. ii.

[2] Col. iii. 1. This phrase of course comes from Psalm cx. 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In the account of the death of Stephen, Acts vii. 56, the martyr sees the Son of Man *standing* on the right hand of God. The difference is curious, but it is difficult to say exactly what it means.

the literalness of the phrase by adding: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," a phrase of superb mysticism. In another place[1] he writes that though he has known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth he knows him so no more. This reference is not to the human life of Jesus, which Paul had probably not witnessed, but to the kind of knowledge which is only of the senses, and has not become a process of the spirit. Christ, he says again, lives in the power of God.[2] As Christ lives in God, he teaches, so shall the believer live in Christ.

The fact is that Paul does not distinguish two different doctrines, the doctrine of the Exalted Christ and the doctrine of the Mystic Christ. The first is of Jewish origin, and arose in close connection with the apocalyptic belief in the Second Coming and the end of the world. Jesus Christ was seated at the right hand of God until he should return. Meantime chosen followers were allowed glimpses of his glory, and received from him messages for the Church. The second is derived from, or at all events parallel to, the beliefs of the Hellenistic Mysteries. The Mystic Christ is the Christ whose Spirit works in the world, and whose life is shared and carried on in the Church by every believer. These two doctrines, so different in origin and character, were fused together by the fire of the Apostle's enthusiasm. As to their later history and

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16.

[2] 2 Cor. xiii. 4. The R.V. has "*through* the power of God": the meaning is much the same.

more modern aspect I shall have more to say in the last chapter.

How far Christians may, in Paul's view, have a conviction of a personal intercourse with an exalted Saviour, is a very difficult question. Paul evidently regarded such intercourse in his own case as a special privilege, which constituted him an Apostle and gave him unusual authority in the Church. He does not speak of it as the common property of believers. He bids his converts grow into Christ, and share the life of Christ; he does not expect them to set up their Christian inspiration against his. And such special inspiration, whether coming in actual visions and words, or appearing only in the form of inner experience, has been claimed in the Church mainly by the few, the great saints and teachers who have professed a commission received direct from the Heavenly Founder of the Church. A Christian need not be conscious of such special communications. The life in Christ is primarily that of the community: only in the second place that of the leaders to whom Christ is in a special manner revealed. The Christians are a privileged people who, through partaking the life of Christ, have an exceptional relation to God, and have in themselves the power of an eternal life.

Undoubtedly, in the thought of Paul as regards his Master there is much which was of the time. He thought of Jesus Christ as in a spiritual body sitting above the firmament at the right hand of God, and thence revealing himself to his chosen servants. His imagination was harmonised to the geocentric system of

astronomy, and he had no conception of the infinitude of space, or the dominance of physical law. We are often obliged to make mental reservations in accepting his utterances. But it is easy to translate them from the sphere of the literal to that of the symbolic. And however our scientific views may have undergone change and development, we still need the help of imagination in realising the existence of spiritual powers. The imagination moves slowly, and is in all ages of perpetual youth. I suppose that there are few men who have a vivid realisation of the divine presence, who do not find it helpful or necessary to place before their mental vision some image of an exalted and glorified human being, to be to them what the beautiful idols of Greece were to the pious Hellene, or the majestic figure in the mosaic of an apse to the mediæval Christian.

Commentators have been anxious to show that in some passages Paul applies to Christ the term θεός, God. Perhaps the most notable of these passages is Rom. ix. 5, which I should venture thus to render, "Our fathers of whom was born as regards his body, Christ, who is now God over all, blessed for ever."[1] I should be quite ready to admit that here the word θεός does apply to the exalted Christ. But that word was in the time of Paul used far more loosely than at present for divine powers and emanations. We might suppose that

[1] It is impossible merely to state all the views which have been put forward as to the punctuation and the meaning of this passage, which, as Sanday and Headlam observe, has been discussed at greater length than any other in the New Testament. There is some difference in meaning between θεός and ὁ θεός, but it is impossible in a short space to discuss the difference.

a pious Jew would be very strict in the use of the term; but that Paul is in fact not strict may be seen from 2 Cor. iv. 4, where he speaks of the minds of the unbelieving as blinded by the God (ὁ θεός) of this world, meaning the chief spiritual opponent of Christianity. In the very same verse he calls Christ the "image of God." If, then, we argued in the stiff and literal way of some commentators, we could maintain that Paul regarded Satan as of higher spiritual rank than Christ, which is absurd. There is no end to the confusions and difficulties into which we may fall if we insist on treating the Pauline Epistles as dogma rather than as literature.

Those who cling to the old untenable view of doctrine, that it is a series of precise logical statements as to heavenly things formulated in human words, will find great difficulty in reconciling some of Paul's sayings with the Creeds. He apparently denies that the Son is equal to the Father as regards his Godhead. As the Fourth Evangelist makes Jesus say, "My Father is greater than I," so Paul says that it is by God that Jesus Christ was exalted. The Pauline conception is of an exalted Being, dwelling in the light of God, acting as demiurge in the creation of the world; then voluntarily taking human form for the redemption of men, dying on the cross, returning to heavenly glory even greater than before, waiting the time for a second appearance on earth.

But in the case of Paul we must allow for the inconsistency which comes from his practical turn of mind. Taken literally, his words almost seem to imply

the setting up of a second and more accessible Divinity. But, after all, to one brought up as a Jew such a belief could scarcely be possible. And no Jew could be more intensely monotheistic than Paul. The later Creeds of the Church set monotheism and tritheism side by side, and leave them so, without any serious attempt to reconcile them. But speculative theology has no attractions for a teacher so intensely earnest as Paul. And so what is implied in his general attitude is a more Christian view than that which he sometimes seems to express. He regards worship and prayer as due to God alone. Prayer to Christ is nowhere advocated. Christ does not, to his essential belief, appear as a figure interposed between God and man, but as a way of approach to God. Between the love of God for men and the self-devoting love of Christ for men he draws no distinction. For example, in Rom. viii. Paul speaks of the love of God in giving up his own Son and of the love of Christ in dying, in one breath. And immediately after asking, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he goes on to say that nothing created "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Similarly he speaks of God in Christ as reconciling the world to himself. Christ does not intercept the worship due to God alone, but brings God within reach of human worship; and he does not stand in the place of God to guide and inspire the Church, but is the channel by which divine aid flows into the Church.

All this is the direct teaching of experience. By the facts of his ministry, by the events of his missionary

life, Paul discovered that a great power accompanied the preaching of the word, a power new to the history of the world, and connected in a most practical and undeniable way with the life and death of Jesus. This power was of God, and worked for the salvation of men. It was as if a new side of God had been discovered, and a new channel opened by which the power and grace of God might flow down to men. Whether this divine influence were called the Divine Spirit or the Spirit of Christ mattered little. The important question was not of names and definitions, but of manner of working. And this could not be known by any means save through the phenomena of the infant Church. . . .

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Chapter X

FAITH AND THE CHURCH

I

If the account of Paul's conversion and call which was set forth in earlier chapters be a true view, the Pauline doctrine of salvation by faith took its rise from personal spiritual experience, from a profound consciousness of sin metamorphosed into a sense of redemption and salvation through the sinner being grafted into the life of Christ, and trusting to a mighty spiritual power. But the convictions which began in personal experience went on acting through the Apostle on the world, and resulted in the establishment of a great Christian society built upon the foundation of faith.

In this there is nothing strange or abnormal. It is in fact what has taken place usually, if not universally, at the time of great outbursts of spiritual life. If we read the life of almost any of the great spiritual leaders within the Christian society, or indeed outside it, we shall find that he began with a personal inner inspiration. Examples crowd in on the mind. Augustine tells us in his *Confessions* through what phases of despair and hope, of depression and exaltation,

he passed before he became the founder of the mediæval Church. Francis by his own line of conduct made the society of the Friars. Ignatius Loyola thought chiefly of his own escape from perdition; the result was the Jesuit society. Luther and Wesley in the same way set out to save their own souls, and ended by forming great Churches. When a man has once thoroughly reformed himself, the reform of those about him is often little more than a corollary. The city which is at one in itself is likely to be a conquering city.

Did the same order of events take place in the life of the Founder of Christianity? Here the poorness of the historic material leaves us very much to desire. Yet in the Gospels, much as the life of the Founder is idealised and smoothed out, we may clearly trace inner strivings and final self-conquest, in the very brief and symbolical story of the temptation, and in the agony in Gethsemane. We find even less testimony in regard to any deliberate attempt to build up a society to carry on the work of the Kingdom of God. The Master chose twelve Apostles, and beside them we hear of seventy others; but he is not said to have delivered to them any principles of organisation. They were to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to preach the Evangel; but we gain no information as to the way in which they were to mould themselves into a Church. All, of course, kept the Jewish law; and they were not instructed even to form separate synagogues in the Jewish cities.

At the end of Paul's career the Christian Church was in a very different position from that which it occupied

at the time of his conversion. By the Roman magistrates the Christians were doubtless regarded as a dissenting sect of Judaism. But already they had passed this stage. Their assemblies and synagogues were quite distinct from those of orthodox Jews. The Apostles exercised over them an authority, the limits of which were scarcely defined. They had already begun, following the example of the political and religious communities around them, to elect officers and elders. They sometimes expelled unworthy members. This organisation took place, as did the organisation of the Friars or the Methodists, spontaneously. It was not thought out by anyone in authority, but was developed to meet felt needs.

In the binding together of the Christian Church or Churches, and in their segregation from surrounding society, was necessarily involved the principle of organisation, which was sure to come. It did not proceed far in the lifetime of Paul himself. Even such development as is implied in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus is probably later than Paul's death.[1] But the seeds whence organisation was to arise already existed.

If the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians are Pauline, which scarcely anyone now doubts, we may with confidence use them for recovering Paul's notion

[1] The majority of scientific critics consider that these Epistles are not Pauline. Anyone who reads the latter part of the First and the earlier part of the Second Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus immediately after reading the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, will find himself in quite a changed intellectual and moral atmosphere.

of Church organisation. In the most vivid way they bring before us the precise condition of the Pauline Churches as regards discipline. A striking passage is found in 1 Cor. v. A member of the Church at Corinth had been guilty of incest. If such an one could remain a member of the society, it must be hopelessly contaminated. Does Paul urge that the bishop and elders should take the matter in hand and formally expel him? If Paul had written a century later, he must have taken this line. But in the whole Epistle there is no evidence that such functionaries yet existed. It is evident that we have to do with a pure democracy, in which the only authority is in the first place the Spirit of Christ, and in the second place the Apostle himself in the right of Founder. "I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Nothing could be clearer or more graphic. The only ruler of the Church is the Spirit of Christ. If Luke had given us an account of the matter, he would have spoken of the ultimate power as resting with the Holy Spirit; but names and phrases matter little. Paul himself has been given, by direct revelation of his Lord, a special spiritual authority in the Church. But such power can only be exercised through a general assembly of the members of the Church, who

have authority not merely to expel the offender, but solemnly to deprive him of all share in the Spirit which dwelt in the Church, and to hand him over to its deadliest foe, in the hope that he may yet finally repent and be restored.

Within the Church itself all power is given by the direct gift of the Spirit, who confers upon some the power of teaching, upon some the gift of tongues, upon some the interpretation of tongues; but such power can only be exercised by consent of the community. Those teachers and preachers who come to the Church from without must be judged by the spiritual power which they show, not merely miraculous power or power of healing, but by their moral force and the character of their teaching.

Of course such an organisation, or want of organisation, could be but temporary. As the flame of the first inspiration died down, an outward discipline became necessary to check the aberrations of enthusiasm. A democracy cannot be trusted long to judge sanely. We have a glimpse in Acts of the appointment of a fresh Apostle by lot among two selected disciples. Ordinarily at first the officials of the Church were chosen by the body of members. Luke speaks of Paul and Barnabas as appointing elders or presbyters in the churches of Asia.[1] And if the Epistles to Timothy and Titus are by Paul, he not only appointed officers in the Churches which he founded, but even encouraged them to name their successors. It is, however, far more probable that these Epistles represent

[1] Acts xiv. 23.

a later stage than the Pauline in Church development. Considering how much authority the Apostle claimed in what we may call his own Churches, it would not seem unnatural that he should nominate deputies to take his place when he was absent. But we have no satisfactory evidence that he did so, and we have clear proof in the case of the Churches of Corinth and of Galatia that he did not do so. And for history evidence is of more value than probability.

We have, however, during the lifetime of Paul some evidence of a beginning of crystallisation. The speech of St Paul at Miletus to the emissaries of the Church at Ephesus has every appearance of authenticity, and it seems that the writer of Acts was present on the occasion.[1] The emissaries were elders or presbyters, and in his address to them Paul speaks of them as men to whom the Holy Spirit had committed the care of the Church, making them its overseers or bishops (ἐπισκόποι). That bishops and presbyters are here not distinguished, but clearly identified, is beyond dispute; and it is thus clear that at the time the terms were used quite vaguely. Nor does Paul for a moment suggest that it was he who had nominated the presbyters or bishops: he indeed implies the contrary. At the beginning of the Epistle to the Philippians, written from Rome, Paul mentions bishops and deacons as in office in their Church. If therefore we go by the strict letter of our authorities, we must suppose that towards the end of Paul's life bishops or

[1] Nevertheless, of course, it is quite possible that words not used by the Apostle may have slipped in.

presbyters elected by the Churches, and of undefined authority, were just coming into being. The regular monarchical episcopate belongs to a much later time.

In fact, in the lifetime of Paul the Church was in a perfectly fluid state. Everyone who had been baptized, and who had faith in Christ, was a member of the ideal society of which Christ was the head. Whether any who had faith but had not been baptized were members of the Church is probably a question which had not yet presented itself. The mystic cults of the time insisted upon the preliminary rite of purification before admitting a neophyte. Soon after the time of Paul, and even by himself, very great importance was attached to baptism. It is, however, hardly in accordance with the inwardness which Paul shares with his Master that he should attach magical value to an outward rite. He would probably have said that all who had the spirit of Christ were members of the Church. Christ, he says, had sent him not to baptize, but to preach.

One point, however, is clear. To the Church and its members salvation was confined. This became, by mere partaking of the spirit of Christ, the inward possession of the believer, which he could never lose though the physical world were destroyed. He had an inalienable share in the life which was eternal, a relation to Christ which was so close that nothing could sever it. The Church was a society of the saved in a world which was doomed to destruction. And apart from faith in Christ there was no power which could save in the catastrophe which was shortly to come upon all the human race.

In one remarkable passage Paul speaks of his own filling up of that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ.[1] And in another passage he speaks of the Church as the pleroma or filling up of Christ, as the supplement without which Christ would be incomplete.[2] To many modern Christians these phrases may seem startling. Yet they express only the corollaries of the Pauline view of the Church. If it continues the life of Christ, and is one with him, he must be imperfect without it. One volume of the life of Christ narrates heavenly things; the second speaks of the human life in Palestine; the third narrates the effects of the dwelling of the spirit of Christ among his followers. And all three volumes are necessary to the perfect story. Thus even the humblest Christian has it in his power to add something to Christ's life, and even, in a sense, to improve it.

The question is sometimes asked, What becomes in the Pauline writings of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven? These phrases are, it is true, seldom used by the Apostle. He speaks indeed of the Kingdom of God as independent of rules as to eating and drinking, but consisting of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit;[3] and again of that Kingdom as one which is not to be dwelt in by flesh and blood,[4] and as no place for any who are sinful or full of the lusts of the flesh.[5] Sometimes he speaks of it as in the future, but more often as lying in and beneath the visible world. In

[1] Col. i. 24. [2] Ephes. i. 23. [3] Rom. xiv. 17.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 50. [5] 1 Cor. vi. 10.

this respect he is like his Master. But usually he does not use the phrase "Kingdom of God," because to him the ideal or spiritual Church is what that Kingdom is in the teaching of Jesus. The Kingdom of God is the doing in the world of the will of God. And according to the Pauline conception, this is precisely the function of the Church of Christ. It lives to further the will of God on earth, and it does so by the spirit of Christ. It carries on the obedience of Jesus Christ. As the purposes of a man are formed in his brain and carried out by his limbs, so the purposes of God revealed in Christ, who is the head, are carried out in the world by the members of the Church.

Thus the Pauline doctrine of the Church was altogether built on and developed out of that of salvation by faith.

II

All life on this earth is developed by opposition, and grows through the effort to overcome obstacles. This has notably been the case in regard to Christian doctrine. Almost all the steps of the Church towards the formulation of a creed have been caused by a reaction against what she regarded as error. It was the same from the earliest times. The genealogies at the beginning of two of our Gospels arose from the objection of the Jews to recognise as Messiah one who was not descended from David. The first Gospel is tinged throughout by controversies between Christian and Jew as to the interpretation of Old Testament prophecy. Thus, too, Paul was obliged to

meet in controversy the objections of those of his countrymen who maintained that the best way to a change of life for the nations was not faith in Christ, which might remain an otiose thing, without bearing on conduct, but an acceptance of the Jewish law, the divine origin of which Paul could hardly dispute, and which compelled those who conformed to it to live cleanly and righteously. In the Church at Rome the Jewish element was very strong. Paul decided to attack the hostile way of life in its stronghold. Hence arises the most powerful and intellectual of his Epistles.

When the great Apostle proceeds to throw the result of spiritual experience into intellectual form, all sorts of possibilities of error come in. The great source of these errors is his use of the Old Testament, which he interprets in the manner of the rabbis of his time, and therefore, it is needless to say, not in accordance with true critical methods. In one point he curiously resembles Cicero. As the great Roman orator enforces the tenets of the Stoic morality by transposing into a fresh key the current stories of the early heroes of the Roman Republic, so Paul uses for Christian purposes the tales in Genesis, the histories of Adam, of Abraham, and of Isaac. He does not, any more than does Philo of Alexandria, take the delicious tales of the patriarchs as simple history, but he regards them as allegories and parables, full of a higher meaning. And besides this, the close attention to the words of Scripture which came of the careful study of them in rabbinic schools, made him lay upon particular words and forms a stress quite foreign to the writers. That the biblical text

on which he laid such stress was that of the Septuagint, and not of the Hebrew Bible, need not surprise us when we remember how many English divines have attributed something like infallibility to the words of the English version of the Bible.

Paul, like Apollos, was mighty in the Scriptures. Evidently he had been familiar with the sacred text from childhood onward. And at every turn in his letters the phrases of Scripture come in, sometimes confirming, sometimes illustrating, and sometimes leading him away to quite a fresh point. Thus the fall of Adam, the calling of Abraham, the birth of Isaac and Ishmael, become to him foreshadowings of Christian teaching, just as to the writer to the Hebrews the Jewish sacrifices pointed forwards to the sacrifice of Christ. But the analogies on which this last gifted writer dwells are much more real than those set forth by Paul.

The problem is, how out of the Jewish Scriptures to prove the truth of the teaching of salvation by faith in Christ. First, Adam pays his quota. As by one man came the tendency to sin and the punishment of death, so it was natural that by one should come salvation from sin and release from death. But Paul's chief insistence is on the story of Abraham, on which he dwells in two Epistles. The Septuagint gives the phrase, "Abraham had faith in God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness."[1] Here we have almost a verbal anticipation of Paul's doctrine. We cannot wonder at his insistence upon it. And since

[1] Genesis xv. 6.

Abraham was said to have been the father of the Jewish nation, and to have lived four hundred and thirty years before the law was given, it is easy for Paul to show that the doctrine of salvation by faith is much older and more venerable than that of salvation through the law, even from the strictly Jewish point of view. Nay, even salvation by Christ was promised to Abraham, for the promise was made to him and to his seed, and the word "seed" being in the singular implies one descendant in particular, that is, Christ.

But, further, the promise to Abraham was not inherited by all his children, for the descendants of Ishmael had no part in it. It came to the descendants of Isaac only, because Isaac was a son by promise, and not only by birth. And in the next generation, again, it was restricted to the children of Jacob, while those of Esau were excluded. Thus it was the spiritual, not merely the carnal, children of Abraham who inherited his blessing. And if God chose in later times to extend to Gentiles also this salvation, regarding them as the heirs of the faith of Abraham, while a great part of Israel, seeking righteousness through the law, fell away from the inheritance of faith, was not God in this case acting as he had originally acted in the rejection of Ishmael and Esau, and once more showing that the true Israel was not a tribe set apart by blood, but a spiritual community?

The teaching that Christians were the true spiritual Israel and heirs of the divine promise, while most of those who were Israelites by blood were rejected because of want of faith, was of course an extreme

paradox, one of those great paradoxes which have changed the history of the word. To the early Christian community it was of immense value, constituting it at once the heir of Jewish morality and of the Jewish Scriptures, and establishing it as in a special sense the people of Jehovah. It cannot be wondered at that orthodox Jews have always been very bitter against the man who thus with astounding audacity robbed them of their patrimony. Not, of course, that Paul or anyone could deprive the Jews of their history and their law. But he went far to deprive them of their sense of superiority to the rest of the world, a thing with which none of us is disposed to part lightly. But, after all, the final result has been not to lower Israel, but to extend the religious privileges of Israel to the whole world.

The notion that Jerusalem was destined to become a joy of the whole earth, the religious centre of the nations, and that the God of Israel would some day make the nations share the religious privileges of Israel, meets us intermittently through the writings of the Prophets. Sometimes this consummation seems far off, as though the rays of the Sun of Righteousness would only distantly illuminate the surrounding peoples. Sometimes it seems close at hand, as in those chapters of Isaiah which are almost bursting with delight and hope of the restoration of Israel. But, of course, in all the Jewish Scriptures, there is no notion of an equality between Jew and Gentile. "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your ploughmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the

priests of Jehovah: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." Much of this intense feeling of superiority survived into early Christianity, as when the author of the Apocalypse says of the new Jerusalem that "they shall bring the glory and the honour of the Gentiles into it." Even the Founder of Christianity is reported as having said on one occasion, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Realising these things, one can understand the horror and amazement with which the Pauline doctrine of the equality in Christ of Jew and Gentile would be received by the sons of Israel, whether they accepted the new faith or not.

The Jews who were dispersed through the cities of Greece and Asia soon saw that the acceptance of the Pauline gospel would do away with that conviction of special privilege and religious superiority which was intensely dear to them. So long as it appeared that the preaching of Paul might bring a new crowd of proselytes to the synagogue, his mission might seem one to be encouraged, or at least tolerated. But when the way to Christianity ceased to pass through the synagogue, the Jews began to view Paul with a bitter hatred, which even to our days has never died away. He was to them the arch-renegade, whose success would mean the destruction of the Jewish mission to the world, and the merging of the race in that *colluvies gentium* which filled the Roman world. The whole course of events may be traced in the narrative of Acts, which book, though written for a purpose, and much

more accurate in geographic than in historic fact, is yet a wonderful picture of the life and problems of the early Church.

III

We may follow one or two outgrowths of the Pauline teaching. One of the least attractive of these is the doctrine of divine election and reprobation. If God chose Isaac rather than Ishmael, and selected Jacob for love and Esau for hatred, and that before they were born or had done good or evil, might he not in the same way choose among more modern men some for salvation and some for reprobation? No doubt Paul did not adopt the doctrine of election in consequence of this argument. Earlier in the Roman Epistle (viii. 28) he states the doctrine; and when he wishes to express it more explicitly, he has only to borrow the phrases as to the clay and the potter which are to be found in Isaiah and Jeremiah. It was a doctrine commonly held in Israel. And however much it may shock the modern conscience, there can be no doubt that, at various crises of history, the acceptance of such teaching has enabled nations and communities to survive when otherwise they would have been crushed. Probably most great men of action hold in some form a doctrine of fatalism, regard themselves as the fingers of a divine purpose, or of an inscrutable fate in the world. And, further, it is one of the most certain facts in the psychology of religion that divine grace does play a perfectly incalculable part in the life of men, nor can we discern at all on what principles those who are most

conscious of direct divine aid are selected. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou . . . canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The doctrine of reprobation, as opposed to that of election, has a far more sad and sinister aspect. But the one doctrine has usually been regarded as logically inseparable from the other. Of late years they have begun to seem to us separable, at least in a measure.

But Paul had scarcely finished his exposition of the doctrine of election, when he felt a certain compunction.[1] The Israelite awoke in his heart, and it seemed to him that he had put the calling and the mission of his race on too low a level. He begins to make excuse for the rigidity of his judgment; partly by calling on the Gentiles to justify their new position in the world. If they were admitted to the same privileges as the people chosen of old by God to be his own, they must not be puffed up. "Be not high-minded, for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee." And then in words which are profoundly human and deeply pathetic, he expresses his earnest conviction that the rejection of the Jews is but temporary; and that in the end the natural branches of the olive-tree which had been cut off shall be grafted into it again, so that all Israel may be saved.

IV

The root of the Pauline doctrine of the Church is salvation by faith. But the outward and visible result

[1] Rom. xi. 13.

of that doctrine was the appearance in the world of a society in externals resembling the mystic sects of the Hellenistic world.

Paul accepts and develops the idea that Christians are a society, an organisation, the relation to which of the members is closer than that which binds them to their family, their clan, or their city. We may trace the germ of this idea in sayings attributed to the Founder, such as, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."[1] Do these words really come from Jesus? It is probable, but it is impossible to be sure. At any rate this is the view accepted by Paul. He clearly thinks the brotherhood between Christians so close that it will naturally override all merely natural relations, even the closest of blood ties, not to speak of such vaguer relations as those to city or country.

I have already mentioned the two luminous images in which Paul sets forth the relation of the Christian society to its exalted Head. Sometimes he speaks of the Church as the bride of Christ, sometimes as the earthly body of Christ. Neither figure is new. The Jewish prophets often speak of their nation as the wife of Jehovah. And a parable of the body and the members meets us in the pages of Dionysius, according to whom Menenius Agrippa applied it to the Roman commonwealth. It is a comparison much in favour with the Stoics. Both figures have been of inestimable

[1] Matt. x. 37, viii. 22.

value in the Church; and both give the point of view of the religious cults of the Hellenistic age, which reckoned membership of their society as a tie so close as to override all worldly relations. It was because they took this line that the Roman Republic was bitterly hostile to these cults, regarding them as anti-patriotic.

In the early Christian Church then, we have a compact society, not united by any tie of nationality or kinship, but held together by a direct relation to a divine being, a relation so close as to supersede all worldly ties. The followers of Christ, like the votaries of Isis[1] and the soldiers of Mithras, appeared to the eyes of the Romans as a fanatical society, bound together not only by the ties of mutual trust and sympathy, but by a common hatred of the rest of mankind. In the face of the utterances of Jesus as to love to one's neighbour, and the Pauline hymn of charity, we find it very hard to realise how magistrates can speak of the Christian society as full of hatred of mankind. Even Pliny, when he makes inquiry,[2] can only report that Christians bound themselves by an oath not to steal, nor to commit adultery, nor to break their word, and that the worst of them was their foul superstition and their intolerable obstinacy. We can, however, be sure, that such was the official Roman view; and it was the same feeling which induced the greatest of Japanese Emperors to exterminate the Christians in his dominions. The notion that religious belief is not the affair of the

[1] The *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius shows us how close and how unworldly was the tie binding together these votaries.

[2] Ep. xcvi.

state is of course a purely modern view. Most of the Roman Emperors looked on the Christian Church as an enemy until Constantine discovered that he could use it as an ally. They regarded the Christian society just as the Roman Republic regarded the Orphic societies of Southern Italy, which it violently suppressed in the second century B.C. In regard to the latter Mommsen[1] writes, "Of course all rational men were agreed in the condemnation of these spurious forms of religion, as absurd as they were injurious to the Commonwealth." This phrase well expresses the views of the Christian Church current among the Roman officials.

[1] Book III., chap. xiii.

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Chapter XI

ST PAUL AND MODERNITY

It is the first principle of generous historic criticism to appreciate in men of the past what they have nobly felt and done, rather than to blame them for that in which they have been defective. Looking down from a mountain one sees the conformation of a country as those who are travelling in the plain cannot hope to see it. So we, taking into our survey all the sides and aspects of ancient civilisation, see many things which were hidden from men of the time. In studying St Paul we must never forget that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee. A great deal of what was best in the life of Greece and Rome, which even in our day is a guide and a light for us, was to him non-existent. He probably knew next to nothing of the magnificent literature of Greece and Rome. The most splendid triumphs of sculptural and architectural art were in his eyes idols and idol temples, and to Paul an idol was "nothing at all," a mere sign of human depravity. Although he unwittingly adopted from his Jewish teachers some of the rich fruits of Platonic philosophy, philosophy was to him mere trifling, the worthless wisdom of this

world. The poetical myths in which the imagination of Greece had embodied the national speculations as to the nature and origin of the cosmos were old wives' fables. Zeus and Athena and Apollo, in whom were summed up the religious and ethical experience of the Hellenic race, were mere demons, and enemies of the truth. He was like a horse, running with energy and devotion on the road into which he had been driven by the whip of the master, but not looking to right and left of the road. And we can no more blame him for this limitation of outlook than we can condemn him for not foreseeing the future introduction into Christianity by the Northern nations of Europe of the spirit of chivalry, or the partial consecration of pagan art by the Church at the Renaissance.

Science now occupies a space in our lives of which no ancient thinker could have dreamed. And art, especially music, takes a place in the world, not indeed greater than art held at Athens, but immeasurably greater than it held at Jerusalem and Cæsarea. When we think of these things we do not need the help of St Paul. But in the problems of conduct, in our practical life of joy and sorrow, in determining the relations of the flesh to the spirit, in our spiritual life, and our hope of a life beyond the grave, we find the charts drawn up by St Paul still of the greatest value. Old as the charts are, they are valuable because they are based upon real plumbings, and because the sea changes only by slow and imperceptible gradations. And perhaps we have not now the means for searching as deeply as he searched into the nature of that which

can be seen not by the bodily eyes but by the eyes of the spirit.

I

We must begin by considering those elements in the teaching of St Paul which were of a more temporary character. He occupies a definite place in the history of the Church, and his teaching makes a bridge between that of the Founder of Christianity and that of the fully developed Church. Thus it was in some respects transitional, and as such unadapted for perpetuity. And besides this, his doctrines were not thought out as part of a great scheme, but largely moulded to meet the necessities of the time. Beyond all men he had a sense of the growth of the society; it developed within him at the same time that it grew in the world without. It is not in spite of his inspiration, but rather in virtue of it, that he makes light of formulæ, and thinks rather of fact and action. He always regards life as greater than opinion, and conduct as more important than creed. It is, in fact, an attitude of mind which can be appreciated best by those who have felt the strong breeze which is driving modern thought in the direction of pragmatism.

This is obviously not a place to set forth or to defend the philosophic basis of pragmatism as a system of thought. In fact from the philosophic point of view there are various kinds of pragmatism, nor has the whole subject been fully thought out, even by its most accomplished advocate, the late Professor William James. But as a tendency of thought

pragmatism has been making its way in the fields of religion and of ethics for a long while past. It is a pragmatist view to believe that the tendency makes its way first, and that the attempt to find a philosophic basis or justification of it comes later. Modernism in the Church of Rome is based upon pragmatism, sometimes of a too narrow kind. One cannot take up any religious magazine of serious and thoughtful cast without finding pragmatism underlying some of the more striking papers. It is preached every Sunday from hundreds of pulpits. The most usual lines of defence of Christianity against the attacks of scepticism and secularity are pragmatist. Therefore to discover that St Paul was at heart a pragmatist, and in deep sympathy with this modern way of regarding religion, is a happy thing. Paul is one of those great and many-sided writers who seem to each age to preach the things to that age most necessary. His thought can bear the vesture of many successive ages, and live through immense changes in the intellectual atmosphere. To some he has been the second founder of the Church as an institution. To some he has been the apostle of personal religion and the Protestant revolt against Rome. And both of these appeals have some reasonable basis.

It has been the same with a few more great reformers. All the schools of Greek philosophy—Cynics, Academics, Stoics, Sceptics—traced back their lineage to Socrates, and regarded him as their prototype and founder. Plato has given rise to dozens of schools of thought in all ages, schools very inconsistent

one with the other. Aristotle had a second birth in Arabia, and a third in the Christian Middle Ages. In more modern days Kant and Spinoza have been the starting-point for systems which reach out far beyond the limits of their own speculations. It is not opinions which the successors of such men borrow from them, but living ideas, which one may contemplate from many points of view, and which contained possibilities of which those who first discerned them and brought them within human ken had no conception.

The success of the Pauline teaching in the Church probably seems to us much greater than it would have seemed to an observer at the time. All his life Paul was struggling against opposition. In comparison with the Apostles at Jerusalem he was something of a *parvenu*; and if we could have asked James, or even Peter, what he thought of the Pauline teaching, we might not have been satisfied with the answer. This is concealed from us by the skilful pen of Luke, who hides the factions in the infant Church under a broad covering of Christian charity. Even in the Churches which Paul founded, he had, as we know from his letters, to meet with much ingratitude and even hostility. His own friends, such as Apollos, seem sometimes to have joined the opposition. And in the Christian literature of the second century we find comparatively little appreciation of the Pauline teaching. His letters were above the heads of ordinary Christians; and though some of his views appealed to the many, his more complete appreciation was delayed until the leaders of the Church began to come from a higher social station,

and from a class more given to advanced religious thought.

But looking not merely at the time, but at the whole history of the Church, we realise how enormous has been the success of Paulinism, how in the long run it completely transformed Christianity, growing stronger and stronger in many revivals. What is the secret of this great and abiding power? I think that the inspiration of Paul, like the inspiration of most of those who have deeply swayed humanity, consisted intellectually in a power of seeing realities through mere temporary phenomena. Of all the characteristics of the highest teachers, this power of seeing into the heart of things, seeing them as they really are, is the most fundamental. The Pauline explanations of fact, which we call doctrine, had elements of weakness, but in the perception of fact he is supreme. And he not only had the power of seeing realities, but he was borne along by a great stream of spiritual power towards their appreciation, and their furtherance in the world.

Whether or not Paul mentally recognised that the religious forces which were really potent in the world about him were those represented by the mystic sects of Hellenism, at all events he acted as if he had such insight. These forces he brought within the Christian pale, and set them to draw the chariot of the conquering Christ. This was his central achievement. No doubt, he had fellow-workers and helpers. Yet, so far as we can judge, none of these was to be compared with him in efficiency in the task. Stephen and Philip may have been his pioneers. The writer of Hebrews

develops the sacrificial view which is in Paul's Epistles rudimentary. The Fourth Evangelist, in quiet, meditative way, finds an expression for the corollaries of the doctrine for which Paul fought and suffered; but if the ground had not been prepared, his views would scarcely have taken root. It was Paul who transplanted Christianity from the narrow ledge of Judaism into the broad field of Hellenistic culture, and set it in all the ways of commercial and intellectual intercourse. He did not make the leaven, but he introduced it into the dough whence the future of humanity was to be fed.

The same practical insight which enabled Paul to see what were the real religious forces of his time, made him a good judge also of the social and political powers with which Christianity had to reckon. From the Church at Jerusalem he had to accept the Jewish Scriptures and the ethical outlook of the Hebrew people. These, however, were so indispensable a part of his moral nature that he probably never had a doubt in regard to them, and it was not in receiving them that his originality was manifested; but it clearly shows in his relations to the Roman Government. His Master had struck the note of the complete separation of political from religious life. But Paul accepts this with a difference, though we must receive with caution some of the statements of Luke in the matter. It appears to be historic fact that he was proud of his Roman citizenship and that at the last he appealed to the tribunal of Cæsar. And in his Epistles loyalty to the Roman Government

is strongly inculcated. One sees in them the dawning possibility of a concordat between Church and State. And one also sees in them the beginnings of a Church order and constitution which later developed on the lines traced by the constitutions of the Greek cities of Asia, in which regular officers for finance and superintendence were already constituted.

But this actuality, this practical character, of Paul's theology, is another reason why much of it should be only temporary in its outward expression and formulation. Most notably is this the case in regard to the Pauline psychology and eschatology.

II

Some of the Pauline views depend so obviously on what in him belonged to the time and the race, that we are able easily to set them aside. For example, to take an instance which may almost be called notorious, Paul's advice in regard to the expediency of marriage is dictated by his sense of the nearly approaching crisis wherein the whole existing frame of society would be destroyed. He also, quite naturally, acquiesced in beliefs and in customs which prevailed at the time, but which seem to us without any recommendation. He tolerated the custom of baptizing the living on behalf of those who were dead, an usage which we cannot but regard as superstitious. And his views in regard to evil spirits, and especially in regard to dæmonic possession, were just those which were everywhere current.

Another matter in which Paul may easily, by a modern reader, be regarded as opposed to what is best, is the matter of slavery. He not only condones the institution, but he even bids those of his converts who are slaves and have an opportunity of securing freedom, not to take that opportunity. The mistranslation in our version[1] conceals this fact: "if thou canst become free, use it rather," seems to mean "prefer liberty if it may be had." But the better version runs, "Nay, even if thou canst become free, rather remain in thy condition." This is perhaps the extreme case in which apocalyptic hopes blind the writer to the tendencies of social life. But at the time the condition of slavery was so generally regarded as natural, and the state of the slave was so little worse than that of the poor freeman, that we can easily understand the Pauline view. He was impatient of any worldly aspiration which might interfere with the pure life of the spirit.

But setting aside what may fairly be called temporary, we see that there is in the Pauline teaching, and in the Pauline religious attitude, much which is of permanent value.

What Paul himself cared about and felt in the depths of his being:—the contrast between body and spirit, the superiority of things invisible to things visible, the eternal value of righteousness—these are the parts of his psychology and his eschatology which persist; his views as to the ψυχή and as to the spiritual body were transient. It is impossible not to regret that these speculative and personal theories have been made so

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 21.

prominent in the services of the English Church. The burial service comes upon us at moments of intense feeling, when we are deeply regretting the loss of a friend, and eagerly trying to pierce the veil which, no doubt for our good, hides from us the future of the spirit which has quitted the clay which we loved. At such moments it is a pity that the only consolation offered us should be the Pauline prophecy of the Second Coming, and the Pauline theory of the spiritual body, passages of lofty eloquence and sublime feeling, no doubt, yet by no means representing the best that Paul had to say as to the life in Christ, in which death is but an incident. Christian heroes and martyrs, from the time of Stephen onwards, have met the terrors and persecutions of a hostile world, less in the hope of a distant resurrection from the grave than in the conviction that they were departing to be with Christ, which was far better. The life in the flesh and the life in the spirit have been sundered, not by a long sleep but by the instantaneous flash of death.

Paul's doctrine of election is not specially Christian; it is indeed adopted from a school of Jewish thought, and barely baptized into Christ. It is a doctrine which in some ages and to some men has a great attraction, but it has no divine sanction. To make it a corner-stone of a great erection of theological doctrine is more suitable for a sect than for a Church.

In his views as to the Church and the Sacraments, as in his psychology, Paul is in essence right, though with temporary elements. The future of the Church seems to have rested upon him, though he was scarcely

conscious of it, and the tendencies which were afterwards to prevail wrought in him mightily. Yet the materialism of mediæval views of Church and Sacrament is utterly opposed to the whole current of his being.

Greatly as Paul valued the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper as the means of promoting the life of Christ in the Church, it is contrary to the whole drift of his teaching to suppose that he attached great efficacy to the mere outward ceremony. Baptism, we must remember, was in his time confined to converts, not extended to infants. It was accompanied by a confession of faith. So when Paul speaks of baptism as a means of salvation, he means that its efficacy lay not in the mere outward washing, but in the inward change which went with it. This is explicitly stated in the strongly Pauline Epistle which goes under the name of Peter,[1] where the saving efficacy of baptism is said to consist "not in the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the inquiry of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." It is true that Paul does not condemn the superstitious custom of baptizing sponsors for the dead; but his words in regard to it slip out in the midst of an impassioned controversy, when he cannot stop to look at the ethical bearing of the custom.

The Lord's Supper is administered in the English Church in a ritual closely following that prescribed by Paul, and every one who is present at such celebration must feel how simple, how sane, how spiritual, is the rite. Those clergy of the English Church who wish

[1] 1 Peter iii. 21.

to introduce materialist elements into the service find themselves obliged to add other words to the simple ritual prescribed by Paul. I am aware of the enormous part played for good and evil in the Church by the materialisation of the Sacrament, and I have not the rashness to condemn it as a mere perversion. At some times and in some places it may have been the best, or even the necessary, way of escape from worse evils. But it is quite safe to say that it is no part of the Pauline gospel or the Pauline mystery.

In the same way it must be clear to every student of the Epistles that though Paul confines salvation to the Church, and regards the world outside the Church as having no part in eternal life, yet the Church which he thus sets apart is no visible community, but consists of all who are united to Christ by faith. In his time Church organisation was in a fluid condition, and the society was a pure democracy, only the Apostles possessing some undefined prerogatives naturally arising out of their position as the witnesses who carried on the life of Christ into the future. And with them Paul claims perfect equality on the ground of his special call: nor would he probably have been unwilling to allow authority to others who had a similar claim. Probably Paul would scarcely have allowed the name of Christian to any who had not been baptized; but we can scarcely imagine that anyone who intended to be a Christian would stand aloof from baptism in that age; later, of course, baptism was often postponed by professed Christians.

Thus, although Paul was the founder of Church

organisation and doctrine, yet an appeal to his writings and example lies as near to some of the bodies of evangelic dissenters as to the members of the great historic Churches.

Next, we must briefly consider the Pauline ethics.

Paul was, as we have seen, fundamentally ethical, and it was the ethical character of the early Church which enabled it to be victorious in the conflict with paganism. Great importance, therefore, attaches to the question whether the ethics of Paul are of universal and perpetual validity. We often in modern times hear the wish expressed that the Christian ethics might be taught in schools and from the pulpit without an admixture of doctrine. By Christian ethics is in this case meant the best level of morality in the society around us, which is, no doubt, usually the level of persons professing Christianity. But when we take up Christian ethics from the historic point of view, and try to discern what elements in the modern code belong to the Founder, what to Paul, what to Greece or Rome, what to Teutonic antiquity or the Middle Ages, we enter upon a very difficult and complicated investigation. And it will soon appear that of morality as it to-day exists in the best lives, some features are foreign to the New Testament or the primitive Church. We may still, however, call this morality Christian, speaking in a Pauline sense; for it is the morality which the Christian churches have accepted from various sources, and baptized into Christ.

An interesting and suggestive comparison may be made between the ethical atmosphere in which we live

and the air we breathe. The air consists mainly of two elements, oxygen, the furtherer of life and action, and nitrogen, which tempers the oxygen and fits it for the use of living creatures. In the same way, in ethics there are two elements. With oxygen we may compare the ideal element in conduct, the principles and ideas which exist outside consciousness, and through it gradually pass into the world: the purposes (so to speak) which the Maker of the world gradually infuses into his creation. But beside this element of life and progress, there is a more material and conservative element in human conduct and action which seems to be the organised experience of mankind, which, through the survival of those who are best adapted to their environment, gains an immense power in human affairs, and generally, on the average, directs their course.

If a human being tried to breathe nitrogen, he would die; if he tried to breathe pure oxygen, the intensity of his life would destroy the life itself, and he would perish.[1] In the same way those who live by the traditional and utilitarian morality of ordinary behaviour become spiritually torpid. Those who have a passion for ideal morality in such a degree that common-sense and the ordinary ways of the world do not exist for them, or seem to them the mere governance of evil in the world, wear themselves out, and, clashing against the habits and the facts of material existence, are broken to pieces.

[1] It appears that oxygen may be breathed for hours without injury: this fact makes the comparison on which I am dwelling even more exact.

In each man the forces of ideality and of unimaginative materialism come into conflict, and out of the conflict the course of men's lives emerges. In societies also we find the same clashing. Small communities and societies are formed on an ideal level, to produce in the world some raising of the ethical tone, to transform in some respects the conduct habitual in the world about them. Such societies at once find themselves in opposition to ordinary mankind; they are persecuted; and the more they are persecuted, the more closely they cling together, and the more brightly appears the lustre of the ideas which they embody. They are the oxygen; the rest of the people is the nitrogen. Their extinction would lead to the petrifaction of the country in which they work. But their complete triumph would also lead, at the other end of the scale, to destruction, since their principles are not fitted for general adoption under the conditions of normal life.

Following up our comparison, we may say that the inspiration of Jesus is pure oxygen, spiritual life full of the divine ideas. Yet the code set forth in the Sermon on the Mount is not merely unadapted for practice by any state or nation, but it would, if adopted, speedily produce euthanasia of that state or nation. Not to resist evil, when evil men are on every side abundant, is to give the victory to evil. Everyone who has any practical sense, and has followed the life and teaching of men like Tolstoy, who take the precept not to resist evil almost literally (for it may be doubted if any one has ever taken it quite literally), must have come to see that the general adoption of such teaching

would bring to an end the possession of property, civil organisation and government, and even domestic life.

On the other hand, one sees that a small and enthusiastic society, living in the midst of a hostile or indifferent world, might practise non-resistance of evil, and all that goes with it, with very great effect. It would necessarily lead a parasitic life; but it might give, in return for physical sustenance, such stimulus to the practice of goodness and such increase in the love of God and man that it might be a well-spring of blessedness to the community. But I need not speak in the mood of would and might. The world has seen many such societies living for the ideal: the early missionaries of Buddhism, the followers of St Francis in the thirteenth century, and many other such groups. It is such a society which is exhibited in the Gospels: a society wandering homeless, living upon the alms of the faithful, not possessing property, not resisting evil, intent only on learning, on loving, and on practising the will of God, and on doing all the good to mankind which could be done. Such were the earliest Christian ethics.

It is at once clear that to translate these ethics into a code which could be practised by men and women in civil society, and leading the ordinary busy life, was a great and difficult task. As complete transformation was necessary as was requisite when Jewish eschatology had to be translated into the faith in an unseen spiritual world, or Jewish nationality into the belief in a true Israel gathered from among all peoples and

tribes and nations. The great principles, the divine will, love to God and man, unselfishness, kindness, self-control, had to be kept; but they had to be put into another setting. The oxygen must be diluted with nitrogen until it was fit for breathing by living men and women.

This is the transmutation which was begun and partly carried out by Paul; and on the whole not merely with enthusiasm and devotion, but (what is still more noteworthy) with consummate worldly wisdom. The Churches settled in the great cities of Greece and Asia, to which Paul had to minister, existed amid very different surroundings from those of the first wandering band of disciples. The distance to be bridged was enormous. But fortunately the material for a bridge was at hand in the belief, spread among all Christians, of an approaching end of the world. This belief gave a temporary character, almost an unreality, to business relations, to the possession of property, almost to the relation of husband to wife and of child to parent. The impending reign of the saints on earth took the place in imagination and belief of the overlying and underlying spiritual world which had been to Jesus the great reality of existence.

Thus the ethic of Paul, like his other teaching, is transitional. It is adapted to the members of the new society; it is for Christians, not pagans. It governs the way in which the members of the Church are to behave to one another, rather than the way in which they are to behave to civil society around. Pauline morality is adapted to settled societies, not to

wandering bands of enthusiasts. The laws of marriage, of property, of almsgiving, of obedience to the law, are set on something like a durable basis. Though the transitory nature of existing society lies in the background in Paul's mind, and sometimes urges him to such utterances as that the married state is best avoided, yet on the whole he gives wise advice for living in the then present organisation of the world.

It is remarkable, as we have already seen, how near a kinship exists between the ethical principles of Paul and those of his Master. The Pauline lists of virtues embody the feelings of love to God and man which inspired early Christianity. Pureness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, self-accommodation to others, unreadiness to take offence, readiness to forgive, the duty of cleansing the heart as the spring of actions, all these are principles of conduct on which Paul never tires of dwelling. In spite of his ardent temperament, he has much of the "sweet reasonableness" of his Master. In spite of his statesmanlike activity, he has much of his Master's inwardness. The line which began at the baptism of Jesus in Jordan is carried on through the life of Paul in ethics as in other respects.

Yet we must not overlook the fact that in some branches of conduct the contrast between the precepts of the Master and those of the Apostle is very striking. This is especially the case in those which concern the possession of property and the giving of alms. The precepts of Jesus, as we have observed, when literally taken, are inconsistent with the existence of private property. Any community, save one purely

parasitic, which acted upon them would soon starve. In the Epistles of Paul we find a very different strain. He would give short shrift to anyone who was content with a parasitic existence: "If any will not work, neither let him eat."[1] Over and over again in the Epistles Christians are bidden to work, and to work diligently. Nor did the Apostle preach without practising. Though he felt he had a right to sustenance by the Churches, he would not use the right, but lived by his craft of tentmaking, in order that he should not be a burden to others, at all events in the earlier part of his life. When, later, he found it necessary to accept gifts, he does so in terms which show how great a trial to him such acceptance was: "Not that I seek for the gift, but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account."[2] Even the natural and necessary customs of providing for the widows of deceased Christians and for necessitous brethren, he seeks rather to regulate than to stimulate.

Well would it have been for the Church and the world if so sound and wholesome doctrine had been fully accepted. No corruption in the Church has been more fatal than that which practised, in place of the glorious Pauline charity, the mere giving of alms. The strong sense of the Apostle saw clearly how easily the notion that those who lived to the spirit should be provided for in material matters, might become a curse to society. But the Christian society, failing through defects which were the shadows of its best virtues, walked into the snare, to its infinite loss and degrada-

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 10. [2] Phil. iv. 17.

tion. Well would it be even now if we had the courage to write up in our town halls the golden maxim of Paul, that if a man will not work he shall not eat.

An obvious corollary presents itself. If in thirty or forty years the outward circumstances of Christianity were so greatly changed that the Christian ethics took another complexion, what probability, or even possibility, is there that the evolution should stop at that point, and morality remain fixed for all the future ages of the Church? Obviously the process so begun had to proceed further. The morality of Paul was adapted to Churches of Christian citizens in the midst of a heathen population, but it was not always adapted to the people of a Christian state. For example, he is indignant that Christians should go to law one with another before the heathen tribunals. He asks why they should not find arbitrators in their own body. But when the judges had become Christian, and when even the law which they administered had been drawn up by Christian jurisconsults, this appeal loses its force. Why trust rather to the decision of ordinary, untrained Church members than to the wisdom of long-experienced and expert judges who are also Christian? In the same way, Paul's teaching about almsgiving to widows and other Christians in distress is adapted to the circumstances of a small community, where everyone knew everyone, and all abuse could be easily checked. But when the visible Church included all, even the idle and the worthless, general almsgiving would open the door to the most pernicious pauperisation.

In these and in many other respects the data of morality changed as soon as the state became Christian. Later on, the invasions of the barbarians and the foundation of the modern world again brought in fresh conditions. In our own day the great growth of social and economic science has introduced perhaps greater changes in the conditions and basis of ethics than have ever before been seen. What these changes alter or should alter in the traditional Christian morality is evidently far too great a question to be here considered. Many people think that the whole of Christian morality is out of date. I prefer to believe that the great principles of Jesus and Paul remain of perpetual obligation in spite of all outward changes. To do the will of God, to love one's neighbour as oneself, still remain the sum of morality. The true spirit of the Pauline ethics, "the love of love, the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn," is the same always. But how the principle should be applied, and to what sort of conduct it should lead under various conditions, is a question which must be reserved for scientific ethics. We have a thousand ways for tracing what is the will of God, in the material world and in the world of humanity, which were not dreamed of in antiquity, or in the Middle Ages.

In this matter it is clear that I cannot proceed further. But there is one point in the Pauline religion which demands further investigation. Is the great fundamental principle of faith in Christ, and salvation through such faith, of perpetual validity? Or has it in our day lost its virtue?

III

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as constantly setting before his followers faith in God as eternal life. He urges them to a constant approach to God, as the Heavenly Father, who cares for man, loves man, gives the Holy Spirit to all who seek him. Faith in God, prayer to God, are the disciples' breath of life. To do the will of God is the highest aim which man can set before himself. And that will is revealed to him who tries to follow it in action and loves it as it is realised in the world.

When we come to the writings of Paul, though the general point of view is not changed, yet we find a new element, and an element of incomparable importance. For, according to the Pauline gospel, it is by sharing the life of Christ that Christians thus enter into fellowship with the divine. They continue on earth the life of their Master and Founder. By growing into Christ, they partake of eternal life and escape from any real death. By "growing into Christ" he means continuing the divine obedience of Christ, doing the will of God, loving that will, living the life which Jesus lived on earth. By a divine power, which came into the world with Jesus, Christians are to escape from the wickedness of the world, the power of the flesh, the snares of Satan, and to live to holiness and to God.

Probably the great Apostle would have disliked further to analyse his Christian faith. Speculative questions dwell only in the background of his mind, and he only takes them up when he is obliged. And

the modern critical spirit which dissects and analyses in psychologic ways was foreign to his whole cast of thought, was indeed non-existent at the time. But a modern critic is compelled to analyse. We must try to discern the relations of this Christian faith as understood by Paul to his understanding of the history of Christianity, and more especially to his religious experience.

As regards history Paul did not greatly concern himself. He refers frequently to the events recorded in the Old Testament. But it is not history in our sense of the word, an orderly succession of events, which he finds in the sacred records, but an ideal or imaginative history of his own. He views all history, or, at all events, all the history of which he knew, that of his own people, as it were, *sub specie æternitatis*. Adam is for him not a historic person, but the representative of the human race regarded as natural or fleshly. Abraham is for him not only the ancestor of the Jews, but the father of all who have faith. The rock which followed the children of Israel in the desert was Christ.

It is in much the same way that Paul regards the early history of Christianity. He was not anxious to know about the facts of the human life of his Master. He tells us himself that, when at Jerusalem he had opportunities of collecting the testimony of eye-witnesses in regard to that life, he neglected the opportunities. He was convinced that his gospel came to him, not from man, nor through men, but by revelation of Jesus Christ. He depended, necessarily, upon the effects which the human life of his Master had

wrought in the world; but he did not study it as history, rather as a phase or manifestation of something which went on in heaven. The result is that he exhibits in extreme form the relation of faith to history. He goes far beyond the mere fact of history; he interprets it in the light of ideas; he introduces into it divine purpose. He does not, as does the Fourth Evangelist, add to the traditional life events and sayings which are partly or wholly independent of tradition, and which spring directly from the consciousness of the Church. He accepts the outline of the life of Jesus from the Apostles. But he transposes the events of the life, the birth, the baptism, the teaching, into another plane of being. The death he makes a part of the eternal purposes of God, a turning-point in the history of ideal man; and the resurrection is the passing into the world of a new and higher life. To interpret fact, but not to invent it, to be controlled by it, but to pass beyond it, is his method, and it is still the method of all sane and healthy faith. Mere science does not go beyond the facts; morbid faith does not trouble itself about facts.

When we come to the experiential basis of faith, the matter does not stand quite on the same lines. For we can scarcely doubt that Paul supposed himself to have seen his Master in a spiritual form, and to have had direct communications from him, even if we remember that we must not accept with complete confidence the accounts of those communications given in Acts. In fact, he definitely claims to have seen his Lord. Again, on the occasions when Paul besought

that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him, he received the reply,[1] "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness." We know that in a simpler and more primitive state of society, much which with us seems to be only a mental experience impresses the actual senses of seeing and hearing, or at least is supposed to do so.

If Paul had been a sceptic, he might have regarded these visions as the result of overstrained nerves or an excited brain. But he chose to interpret them in the light of his highest ethical life. Even the inward urgings and inspirations which guided his life might well, in the light of a perfectly cold and unmoved intellect, have been regarded as the results of inherited tendency or chance circumstance. Whether he had any temptation so to regard them, such temptations as have been the sorest trials of many Christian saints of more recent times, we cannot tell. But we see clearly how the fire of his spirit triumphed over all doubts, and rose into the high air of utter conviction.

Paul's experience was by no means confined to his personal relation to a divine monitor. In the strength of the Spirit he had set out on his missionary journeys, and everywhere he had found that Spirit working with him in the world. It brought to nothing the opposition of the hosts of evil. It wrought in him many signs and wonders. It made him superior to persecution and sickness. And wherever he went it wrought mightily among those to whom he spoke, convincing of sin, filling with peace and joy in believing, leading

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

to a new life full of higher impulse and Christian enthusiasm, as well as to the exercise of special Christian charismata. The divine force which used him as lightning may use an iron rod, passed through him into others, overpowering by an intense heat the resistance of evil habit and fleshly corruption, and rendering men worthy to take part in the divine Kingdom which was being partly revealed on the earth. It was impossible for one thus borne away in a spiritual flood to doubt of the reality of that flood. And it was impossible for him to stand outside it or watch it as a spectator. So keenly intellectual a man must needs find ways of articulate expression in regard to the source of the Christian inspiration; but he could not enclose it in formulæ, any more than a soldier in the midst of a battle will descant on the virtue of patriotism.

We have already seen that Paul draws no rigid line between the Divine Spirit which thus worked with him and the exalted Christ. It was through the working and power of the Spirit that men were able to live the life in Christ, and to do the will of God.

IV

So far of Paul. But how far does the Pauline point of view as regards history and experience agree with that of modern Christians?

The progress of historic criticism has made us look at the Gospels in a very different way from that in which our ancestors regarded them; we no longer regard them as simple and colourless historic records.

We know that there are to be traced in them alike the conventions accepted at the time by those who wrote history, and very strong ethical tendencies which altered and distorted the representation of facts. Thus we are far less confident than our predecessors in our assertions as regards the teaching, and more particularly as regards the doings, of the historic Jesus. And in particular there is among all men who have had either scientific or historic training a strong tendency to regard as mythical the miraculous setting of that life. Those trained in science feel that these things could not have taken place as reported. And those trained in history understand that, whether they took place or not, they would be supposed to have taken place. Nothing could be more chimerical than to suppose that the question of the historicity of miracles can be confined to a part of the field of ancient history. In some parts of the world, especially in North Africa, miracles are still supposed to be of daily occurrence; and a Mohammedan saint is nothing accounted of unless such tales are told of him. The true marvel is that on the whole our Gospels are so free from miraculous tales. The Apocryphal Gospels are full of them.

It is notable that this modern way of regarding the Gospels has brought us back much nearer to the Pauline point of view. Paul knew nothing of the Virgin Birth: modern criticism sets it decidedly on one side. To Paul the resurrection of Christ was not, as it was to the first disciples, a corporeal arising, but a spiritual manifestation, like the visions which he

had himself experienced. Modern criticism decidedly prefers the Pauline view. Paul, no doubt, believed that his Master had wrought signs and wonders; but he laid as little emphasis on them as on those which he himself wrought. As to the journeyings and public ministry of his Master, Paul knew very little, probably less than a sceptical modern critic would regard as reasonably certain. There are in the Pauline Epistles traces of the influence of the teaching of Jesus, reflections of his spirit, which are very striking and remarkable. But, in regard to the Gospel of Jesus, we are far better informed than Paul could possibly be. No modern missionary could well write letters to his converts so independent of the teaching to be found in the Synoptic Gospels as are the letters of Paul.

Thus, although modern historic criticism has reduced in compass and altered in character the objective history of the Founder, yet it has left us an amply sufficient basis for the erection of such a structure of faith as was built by Paul. We, too, can go beyond the facts by faith, without denying what is established, or setting up as established what is historically doubtful or improbable. We cannot, from the Pauline point of view, say that we have no sufficient historic basis for belief. Thus when some of the most respected authorities of the English Church maintain that Christianity cannot be reasonably defended unless we maintain the miraculous character of the human life of our Founder, we have the right to reply that such a view is in complete

contrast with that of Paul. To him it is not any abnormal entrance into the world of Jesus Christ, or the rising of his body from the tomb, which is the basis of faith, but the continued inspiration of the Christian society. He sees the divine sanction of the religion not in occasional ruptures of the sequence of cause and effect in the world, but in the penetration and transformation of the life of the flesh by the life of the spirit, the result of which may at times be abnormal phenomena, such as speaking with tongues and faith-healing, but which is far better seen in the daily work of the Church, which is a continuation of the spiritual life of the Founder.

So far of history. But how stands the matter in regard to Christian experience? Through all the history of the Church there have been notable persons who have claimed, like Paul, to have received a personal revelation, to have had visions of the Lord. Of such no one can dare to speak hastily or lightly, since some of them have shown in their lives almost as clear proofs of inspiration as Paul himself. But we know also that such a claim has often been put forward by men and women who have no wisdom and no balance, whose utterances it is impossible to accept as embodying the true inspiration of the Church. From the beginning of time there have been true prophets and false prophets, and each generation had to decide as best it might between the two. Other test beside that of the life, of fruits, there is none; and even the test of fruits is of too subjective and personal a character to be used in any definite or scientific way. The test

of *solvitur ambulando* may be satisfactory from the practical point of view; but from the speculative standpoint it is of less value.

Even if the inspiration of a teacher be fully allowed, if he have power to rouse enthusiasm and to lead men to form societies with the aim of working righteousness, yet we know by long experience that this does not show his opinions on spiritual matters to be true. They are seldom without a certain relative truth; they have value to a particular society or to an age. But they cannot be invested with a halo of infallibility without soon becoming a hindrance to thought and an impediment to progress.

But the kind of experience which consists not in personal converse with a divine power, but in working with it upon the world, exists in modern days as in those of the early Church. Here we have the testimony clear and manifold of all those members of the Church militant who have striven or are now striving to spread the Kingdom of their Master. Their testimony is the same as that of Paul, that there is a spiritual power working in them and with them, without whose aid they could do nothing. And I think that the most unimpassioned bystander, looking at the zeal of Christian missionaries in many lands, and the devoted lives of many of the clergy in every branch of the Church, would feel that these things could not be unless the spirit of Christ were still working in his society, far short as the zeal of the Church may fall of what might be wished. Such flowers and such fruit prove that the sap still rises in the tree, that it is

alive. Many religious teachers speak as if modern Christianity were fed merely from the cisterns filled in the days of the Apostles. But unless there were a flowing stream, those cisterns would long ago have run dry.

But certainly it is not only within the framework of the visible Church that the spirit of Christ works. The whole of our ethics, of our practical life, has been deeply tinged with Christianity. Indeed, the spirit of the divine obedience, of living for ideals, is sometimes more clearly seen in the lives of those who are regarded as opponents of Christianity than in the lives of those who have tried to defend Christianity against them. The spirit has gone forth, and blows where it listeth, often where the world least expects to find it. Christ is preached, not seldom, by those who deny Christ; and we can only adopt the Pauline language and say that in whatever spirit or from whatever motive Christ is preached, we cannot but rejoice. Whether they follow with us or not is a matter of comparatively small importance.

We cannot allow that the Christologic views based by Paul upon history and experience, as he interpreted them, were in all respects justified. He divides the life of Jesus Christ into three periods. From the beginning he had lived in heaven, and through him the world was made. He came to earth at the time ordained, to dwell in a human body, and to suffer death upon the cross. He then resumed a spiritual body and ascended into heaven, whence he appeared to Paul himself. And in that spiritual body he was

to come again to reign with his followers in a renewed and spiritual earth.

In this formulation there is much which the modern mind cannot accept. We do not expect the return of Jesus Christ in the clouds. We can discern in what that expectation took its rise, that it was part of an apocalyptic view of history which has passed away. The theory of a spiritual body, although Paul, no doubt, regarded it as based on his own experience, is crude, and is a survival of very primitive forms of belief. And the notion of the ascent to heaven and a return in the clouds belongs to the ancient systems of astronomy which were finally ousted by the system of Copernicus. The tenet of the pre-existence of Christ is, no doubt, still usually held, and may in a certain sense be defended, though it may be held to be more easily in place in an Arian than in an orthodox scheme of belief. It is hardly to be reconciled with the humanity of Jesus, whose life upon earth is in danger of being thus reduced to a mere mirage. This danger may, it is true, be avoided by the acceptance of some theory of the *kenosis*. But while such theories may have temporary value, they do not rest upon any satisfactory basis of fact or of history; and in my opinion they are becoming less and less suited to the intellectual conditions of our time.

It thus seems that in the Pauline Christology there are temporary elements. But the other side of his Christology seems to have far greater permanent validity. When Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as Son of God, as a means of approach to God, as bringing

God nearer to man, he expresses ideas of more value to essential Christianity. The life in Christ is to him life in God; union with Christ is union with God; Christ in the heart is a principle of eternal life.

No one can with care read the Pauline Epistles without finding that with the writer the Christian faith is no intellectual system, no matter of creeds and formulæ, but a life. The life that he lived he lived by faith in Christ. Christ lived again in him. He filled up the measure of the sufferings of Christ. Into this life he would lead his converts, so that they should be members of the body of Christ, so that their old fleshly desires should be crucified with Christ, that they should be baptized with Christ, and rise with him into a new life, which was eternal. This is the spring of Paul's existence; this is his secret, his mystery. And the root of it all lies in faith, a faith which can only be given by the inward working of the Spirit of God leading men to Christ, and implanting in them a divine life revealed alike in individuals and the society into which they are united. The Church was its visible embodiment, but the bond of the Church consisted in a relation to an indwelling and ever-working Spirit, which was gradually moulding the world after the ideals laid up in heaven. He that partook of this life was saved, and he that had no share in it was lost, because without the principle of immortality. So long as this Spirit was present in a teacher or in a community, creeds, rites, organisation, were of subordinate importance one thing alone was necessary.

What would Paul himself in such a case have advised us to accept in the way of formal Christology? I have no doubt that he would have said to us what he said on another occasion: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." There never was a religious teacher more alive than Paul to the superior importance of facts over inferences, of experience over theories. He was essentially distrustful of philosophy and the building up of systems. So long as Christians accepted the facts of Christian experience, and tried to live the life in Christ, I am sure that Paul would not have greatly cared about their speculative views. Those who followed Apollos or Cephas or himself were all one in Christ, partakers of the same divine life, and heirs of the same heavenly hope.

How little Paul himself cared for his theological theories is shown by the willingness with which he made use of language properly belonging to other systems of thought than his own. The special gifts of the early Church, healing, speaking in tongues, and the like, as well as the peace and joy of the Christian life, are usually spoken of by him as fruits of the Divine Spirit. The spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, Christ, are with him three ways of expressing the same idea. Yet how different are they in the creeds of the Church! Thus it seems that, if we proceed on Pauline lines, we shall regard belief in the Spirit working in the Christian society as the one thing essential in the Christian creed, and our theory as to the best way of speaking of that Spirit as a matter of less moment.

It is written in a recent biography of one of the

teachers of the Church that at one time he derived great spiritual consolation through realising the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. Of course one does not doubt that there was some basis in experience for the statement, but one need not regard such experience as a safe ground for theological speculation. And one notices what a marked contrast it makes to any Christianity which can fairly be called Pauline. I suspect, however, that the phrase "distinct personality" may be misleading, and that what the Christian teacher really meant was the objective and ceaseless working of the Holy Spirit in the Church. And here, of course, Paul would have been at one with him.

Some schools of Christianity have preferred to speak of the Power which works in the Church and in the hearts of Christians as the Divine Spirit, rather than as the Living or Mystic Christ. This way of speaking is that usual in Acts. And it is deliberately defended in the Fourth Gospel, where the Holy Spirit is spoken of as carrying on in the world the mission of the Founder, and guiding the hearts and consciences of the faithful. John, however, is not quite consistent, any more than is Paul; he represents Jesus as saying at once, "I will not leave you desolate: I will come unto you," and "If I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him unto you."

I do not mean to say that to most modern Christians the two ways of speaking are indifferent. Prayer to Christ in the spirit of the Litany, that is, with full reference to the human life of Jesus, appears to

some to be of the essence of Christianity. It naturally goes with the expectation of a second coming; but it may well survive the decay of that belief. But to others it may seem that in this way a human figure is placed between God and man. To such the doctrine of the Divine Spirit may be more acceptable. Here anything approaching idolatry is naturally excluded; the Spirit of God is God in the spirit. Of the two possible views neither is more scriptural, more apostolic, or more Christian than the other; but each is suited to a different temperament, perhaps to different nationalities or classes of society.

But we are here entering into deep waters. The question of creed is not one which can be solved in the study, but one which must be fought out by the practical leaders of the Church. And the main question for men of modern days is not the validity of Pauline schemes of doctrine, but whether the fact on which they are based is truth or untruth. Is it a fact that the life and death of Jesus Christ were the occasion of the entrance into the world of a new and mighty spiritual force? Have we through Christ a new and freer avenue of approach to God? Is the life in Christ a true and eternal life?

St Paul had over modern men the enormous superiority which arose from the character of his inspiration. At a great crisis of human history he was called and ordained by God to do an incomparable work, and endowed with the strength and the faculties necessary for the accomplishment of that work. He felt within him the call of mankind and the tendency of the age,

and that call he obeyed with a devotion which has made his name one of the stars for ever. Beside him, the most saintly and devoted of modern Christians seems small indeed.

But in other respects, as regards circumstances and conditions, the advantage does not rest wholly with the Apostle. Like him, we have to make our appeal to history and to experience. And in these matters the modern horizon is far wider than that of the beginnings of Christianity.

The history which lay open to Paul's study was the history of the Jewish race as recorded in the sacred books of the Old Testament, which he did not regard in what we should call a historic light, and the life of Jesus as it reached him through oral tradition, to which he did not pay much attention. Behind us, on the other hand, lies open the long vista of the history of the Christian Church, from the day when Jesus first began to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom to our own times. That history is an immense series of enterprises and experiments, in doctrine, in practical life, in cultus, in organisation, in missionary work. And, instead of regarding that history as a series of types and images, we know that it is a chain of actual events, things which took place in this world of ours, and which have their place in the divine education of the human race. We can study the crises of the Church in their strength and weakness, in their causes and effects; and every one of them has many lessons for our time, and may serve as a chart showing us what to seek and what to avoid.

The experience on which Paul was founded was in general, if we set aside the deeper moments of his inspiration, not after all very different in kind from that which is possible in modern days. We can study the working of the Christian spirit amid a far greater variety of conditions than any known to the Apostle, amid varieties of civilisation and organisation and national temperament. And we have developed a science of religious psychology which puts in order all the phenomena of the religious life, and helps us to see what in them is normal and what abnormal, what produces health of life and what disease. As regards many practical matters, where the Apostle was guided only by a wonderful instinct, we have definite knowledge.

Yet, after all, valuable as are religious history and religious psychology, they inform us rather as to things to be avoided than as to things to be followed. Or if they suggest what is the noblest line for the Church to take, they do nothing to furnish the enthusiasm without which no effectual work can be done in the world. We have better tools than our predecessors; but is the hand which uses the tools more skilful? And do we use the tools to such noble ends as they did? We come back, after all, to character and inspiration, to the Christian life and Christian enthusiasm.

Thus the great debt of humanity to Paul lies in that which he himself regarded as most important. It was his secret, his mystery of salvation by faith, which has been not only the mainspring of his own life, but the source of the best life of the Christian

Church from that day to this. He felt in his own heart the power and influence of the spiritual force which was dawning on the world. He saw that it made alike for the happiness and the righteousness of men, and he flung himself into the battle to fight on its side against every opposing force, whether of men or demons. And because it was a reality and not a mere imagination, it inspired and thrilled him, "to bear him onward through a life of shocks," to cast beneath his feet the opposition of the powers of the world, and to constitute him in a measure the Second Founder of Christianity.

THE END.

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